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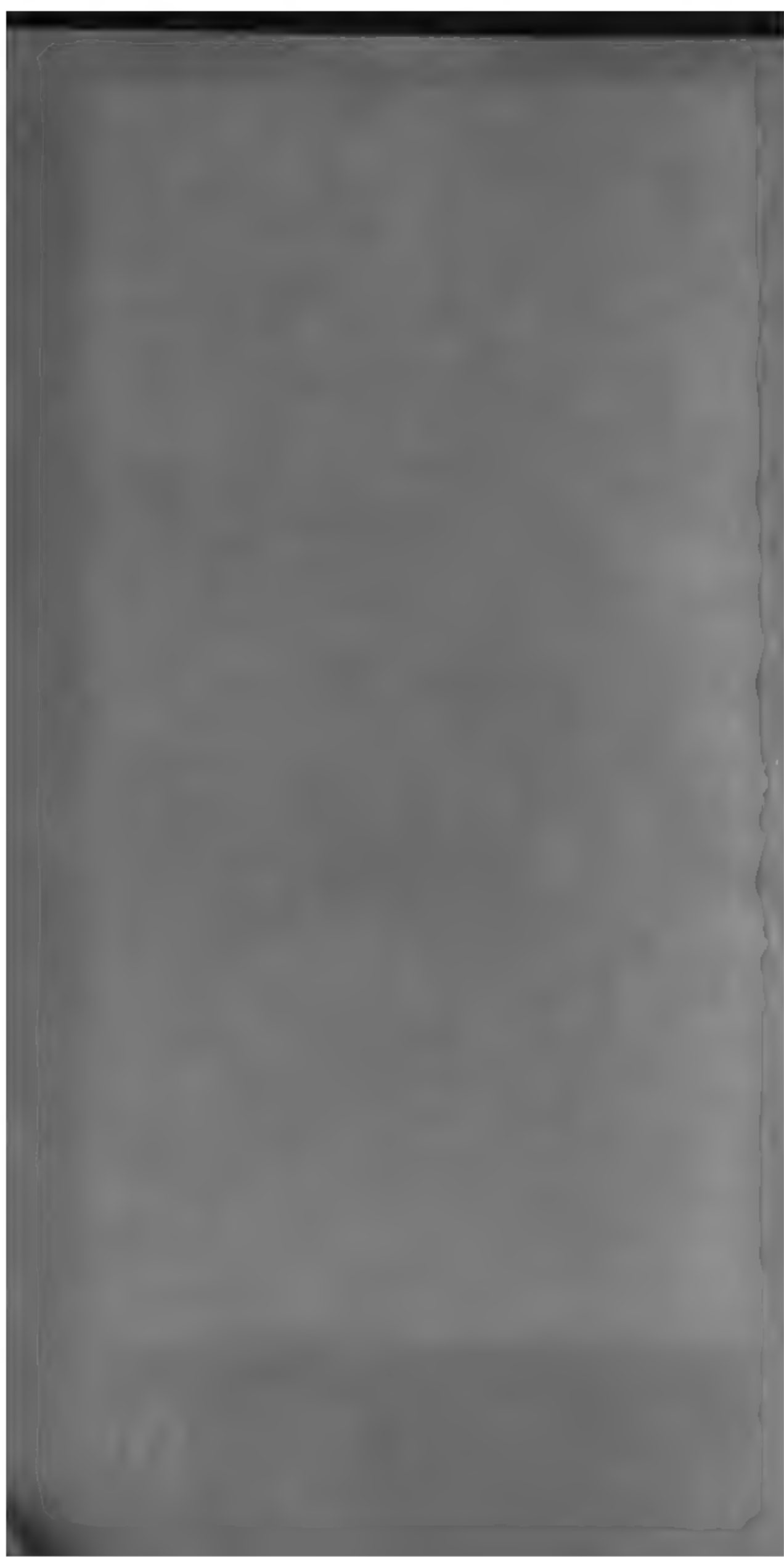
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THE
INDEPENDENT WHIG:

OR, 'A

DEFENCE

OF

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY,

AND OF OUR

ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT,

AGAINST

**THE EXORBITANT CLAIMS AND ENCROACHMENTS OF
FANATICAL AND DISAFFECTED CLERGYMEN.**

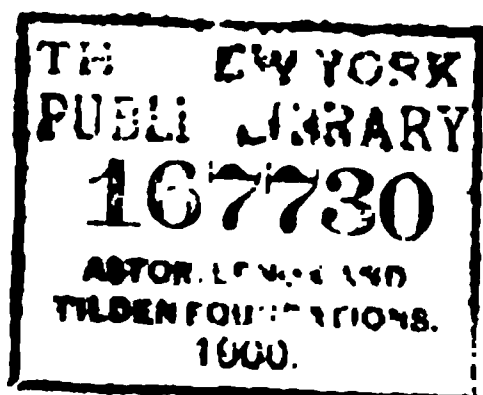
FOUR VOLUMES IN ONE.

VOLS. I. & II.

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.....
1816.



TO THE

LOWER HOUSE OF CONVOCATION.

YOU, gentlemen, who are the representatives of the clergy of England, are proper patrons of a work which treats of religion and the clergy. It is written to promote liberty, virtue, and piety; the interests of which, I hope, you will always espouse, and esteem as your own; and will consequently approve my design, and give me your thanks, whatever may have been the success of my endeavour.

The many wild and unscriptural claims started, and impetuously maintained by very many of those whom you represent (and I wish I could say denied, though but faintly, by any considerable number of others) gave occasion to the following sheets; and, having in them shewn to my brethren, the laity, the absurdity and impiety of those claims, by arguments fetched from reason, the gospel, and the laws of our country; I shall in this address to yourselves, endeavour to convince you, that it is your interest to drop them; and if I can succeed in this point, I presume that all other arguments may be useless.

These gentlemen, in the heat of their demands and contention for power, have gone so far towards Rome, and borrowed so many of her principles, that I see no other medium left for them, but either to proceed on in their journey thither, (which, as they have managed matters, is now a very short one) or to turn back to the principles of the reformation (a very long journey, I confess!) and accept of the Bishop* of Bangor's scheme, as much as they hate it and him. That scheme though it may not be altogether so palatable, yet is a safe scheme: and though it does not entitle them to all the power and wealth in England, yet it secures to them what they have.

Consider, gentlemen, that you cannot take as much of popery as you please, and leave the rest. Machiavel has long since told us, that no government can subsist long but upon its original foundation, and by recurring often to the principles upon which it was first founded. It will indeed stand upon no other; and when that is sapped and undermined, the superstructure must fall to the ground, the old inhabitants must find out new materials, erect new buildings upon other foundations, and are, for the most part, undone by the experiment.

The first principles of our protestant church, are the principles of the reformation; namely, the spiritual supremacy of the crown; the

• Dr. Benjamin Hoadley.

right of the laity to judge for themselves ; the forming of all ecclesiastical polity by the legislature ; and consequently, the creating of clergymen by the civil authority ; a power forgot by too many of the clergy, and remembered against their wills, by the laity. Whoever would maintain the reformation, must maintain these principles ; or embrace popery, if he desert them. Whether the solemn oaths of the clergy in general, have been sufficient pledges and motives for their believing and defending them, I appeal to their behaviour and their writings.

Being the sworn servants of the law, many of them have avowedly contradicted and bid defiance to the law. Being entrusted with serving and instructing the people, they have deceived and set up for commanding the people. Being chosen by the crown to ministerial offices, they have claimed a power above the crown ; from which they acknowledge, upon oath, to have received all power. They have done what in them lay, to make the mercy of God of none effect, by damning whom they pleased ; and to disarm his justice, by pardoning whom they would. They have made heaven itself to wait for the sentence from the priest's mouth, and God himself to follow the judgment of the priest. They have pretended to oblige God Almighty to open and shut heaven's gates. They have asserted that the priesthood is a princely power, greater and more venerable than that of the Emperor : that the spiritual government (that is, a government by priests) is farther above the civil power, than heaven is above the earth : that a bishop is to be honoured as God : that the revenue of priests ought to be greater than the revenue of kings : that greater punishment is due to an offence against a priest, than to an offence against a king : that kings and queens are to bow down before the priest, with their face towards the earth, and to lick up the dust of his feet : that it is the royal office of kings and queens to carry the priest in their bosom, or on their shoulders : that great men ought not to say *my chaplain*, in any other sense than we say, *my king*, or *my God*.'

As to the king's nomination of bishops, and the power that he has over the convocation, they have maintained, that the church should as reasonably have the nomination and deposing of kings ; and that it is as reasonable that the parliament should neither meet nor act without the bishop's licence and authority : that the chief magistrate is bound to submit to the Bishop, who may excommunicate him : that it is a contradiction and an impossibility, for any state to have authority over the church, that is, over the priests : that the priest's power extends to the settling of fasting, and feasting, and clothes : that those clergy who comply with the government, and yet retain their old principles, are the best part, and most numerous of the clergy ; that is, that those of the clergy, who are perjured, are the best and most numerous. They have decreed, that to maintain that the sovereignty of England is in the three estates of England, namely, in king, lords, and commons, is a damnable principle. They have asserted that the lords and commons have no more share in the making of laws, than a beggar has in one's alms : that all subjects are slaves as to life and property : and that resistance is not lawful for the maintenance of the liberties of ourselves and others ; nor for the defence of religion ; nor

for the preservation of church and state ; nor for the salvation of a soul ; no, nor for the redemption of the whole world.'

There is a choice catalogue of these extravagant doctrines, collected in a pamphlet published some years since, and entitled a new catechism, with Dr. Hick's 39 articles ; and all of them taken out of the writings of men in the highest reputation amongst us. Yes gentlemen, all these impious, mad and selfish doctrines have been maintained by those of your order, and never yet contradicted by any publick act of your body. On the contrary, with your usual charity and good nature, you have fallen upon those who exposed them ; though they were evidently the very corner-stones of popery, and a flat contradiction to the whole spirit and progress of the reformation.

There is no medium between popery and the reformation ; that is, between the claiming of any power in religion, and the renouncing of all power in religion : (as you will find fully made out in the following sheets.) The latter is the characteristic of a protestant minister, and the former the black mark of a popish priest. You have it in your choice, gentlemen, which you will choose to resemble.

If you do not think fit to accept the Bishop of Bangor's protestant scheme, which is the same with that of the reformation, and has been ever since the law of the land, there is but one choice left you, namely, that of working about a popish revolution, *per fas and nefas* ; of bringing undisguised popery and the inquisition into the church ; direct slavery upon your country ; and upon your own order, the necessity of throwing yourselves blindly upon the mercy of the court of Rome, for her protection, and licence to preserve your dignities and revenues.

You have no possibility of keeping clear of the pope and the regale both. The king will not part with his prerogative ; the parliament will not give up its authority ; nor will the people entirely part with their senses. And for the bishop of Rome, you would do well to remember what tender usage your predecessors received at his hands. He indeed always discountenanced and oppressed them. The lazy monks, and debauched friars, were his darlings and peculiar care. They were thoroughly detached from the interests of the laity, thorough dependents upon the holy father : they were therefore distinguished as his spiritual janizaries, and the guards of the papacy ; and to them he gave away the revenues and maintenance of the secular clergy, not so much trusted by him.

If you remember this, you will easily judge how much more it is your interest to submit to the easy and gentle authority of the prince ; to live under the protection of the laws of your country, by which your income and all your immunities are ascertained and secured ; than to live exposed to the distrusts of a foreign cruel court, to the rapine of foreign and needy priests, who will be perpetually quartered upon you, perpetually drawing money from you : nay, probably it will grow a maxim in the Roman politicks, that you must be kept poor.

But besides, however good the intentions may be of such men amongst yourselves, or of those whom you represent, to become the subjects, or, as you may vainly imagine, the confederates of Rome ; they will in all likelihood, find it utterly impossible to execute their designs ; and must in all appearance, venture their present possessions upon

the success of such designs. And if they should happen to succeed, they may have the glory indeed of the wickedness ; but the rewards will be, for the most part, reaped by new comers, who had no share in the toil. Foreign ecclesiasticks will be the first in favour, and the highest in place : they will carry off your honours and your preferments : the sincerity of your conversation will be questioned, or pretended to be questioned : there will quickly grow a distinction between old papists and new converts : as in Spain and Portugal, where a wide difference is made between old Christians and new ; which difference holds for many generations ; and, in short, all countenance will be shewn, all favours will be granted, to those who never bowed their heads to Baal. Your behaviour to the late king James will also be remembered, though you have forgot his to you ; and you will be called ingrates, new hypocrites, or old rebels.

I am in hopes, reverend sirs, that from all these considerations, the gentlemen of these notions will find reason to look back to their original at the reformation, and to preach up the principles upon which it stands, since they are like to stand or fall by these principles. Let them veer about once more ; they know how to do it ; and I will be the first to declare that they have been once in the right, once reconciled their views to the liberties of England.

I might likewise fetch an argument from their awkwardness in politicks, to convince them that they ought to be protestants. They have made it manifest, by many trials and long experience, that they are but heavy intriguers, and sadly want both the temper and talents of politicians. The protestant religion being a plain one, supported by obvious truth and common sense, and requiring no managements or finesse to make it go down with the people, would fit them well enough if they could be content with it. But it is quite otherwise with the religion of Rome ; which being a surprising medley of various and contradictory parts, requires the utmost address, delicacy and skill to keep them from falling to pieces. And in this respect, the church of Rome owes its figure and preservation to the court of Rome, where all the nicest secrets of power are understood, all the most curious arts in politicks are practised ; where every absurdity is finely disguised, every cruelty artfully concealed ; where, in fine, they have the knack of making people pleased with being abused, and of forgetting that they are slaves, or of never knowing it.

Hitherto, gentlemen, it has been otherwise with you. Our pretenders of this cast have but grossly aped popery. Their aims have been too open, their management too coarse. A blunt demand at once for all the wealth, and reverence, and power of England, was so ridiculous, that, had we not before known their unhappy state of ignorance, we should have thought that they had been in jest when they made it. Nor has that incurable appetite of theirs, which they cannot hide, of combating conscience with downright force, and brutish violence, done them less harm. In short, good counsel they have seldom taken ; their foolish counsels they never could conceal ; and, God be thanked, their wicked counsels they never yet have been able, thoroughly to execute. They are in truth, but doggerel politicians. English priestcraft is as coarse as the Romish priestcraft is fine. Theirs is the

depths of satan, and ours his shallows ; as is excellently said by the late Mr. Samuel Johnson.

The Romish clergy chose the days of darkness to sow their frauds in. They vended their holy trifles, when ignorance had increased the number of buyers. They planted their power in the fruitful soil of superstition ; and by keeping the people poor, wretched, ignorant, wicked, and fearful, as they every where do, they still maintain their dominion.

But our high gentlemen, who both know and lament, that this nation has seen more days of light and liberty (which indeed are seldom separated) since the revolution, than ever it saw before, have yet preposterously chosen that very time of light and liberty to advance all the wildest claims of popery, and all the vilest tenets of slavery. What could they mean ? Did they not know, that the more men find the use of their understanding, the more loath they are to part with it ? and that those men who are willing to part with their understandings, must have very shallow ones ?

The English laity have been used pretty much of late, to think for themselves ; and we find, as doubtless, gentlemen, you do, that the more men know of church power, the less they like it. They see that priestly pomp always stands on lay misery ; that where the priests are princes, the people are the lowest slaves ; and that church power always rises with the fall of liberty and knowledge.

The popish priests too, as they propagated their lying tenets in the dark, so they did it slyly, and by well-weighted gradations. Every invention of theirs had its proper season. The fire of purgatory was kindled at one time ; indulgencies were hatched at another ; transubstantiation stole in at a convenient hour ; and all their doctrines of gain and power, were broached at politick distances, and as opportunities invited.

But our high priests, as they have observed neither measure nor mercy in their demands upon us ; so neither have they made them at due and discreet intervals. By overloading the cart, they have overturned it. They have frightened us with the broad and black cloud of their pretensions, and made men unanimously oppose that heap of claims and absurdities, which, had they been wise, we might have been brought to swallow singly. They wanted patience, as well as policy.

We were not yet ripe for popery. We had judgment enough to see that all those claims, all those new doctrines, evidently and solely tended to the clergy's advantage, and our undoing. And we thought it was as consistent with natural equity and common sense, that we should be judges in our own case, as that you should be in yours. Indeed, if any amongst you had maintained doctrines evidently grievous to yourselves, and manifestly tending to the knowledge and external happiness of the people, we should at least have thought you in earnest. If, for example, you had contended, that the priests should fast three days in the week, the laity only when they pleased ; that the priests should be entirely at the mercy of the people for a maintenance ; should be restrained from taking above thirty or forty pounds a year salary ; be forbid all pomp and affluence, because they vitiate the mind, and breed pride and laziness ; two faults heinous in a minister of God : I say, if

you had contended for such liberty in the laity, and for such rigorous restraints upon yourselves, it would have carried in it the face of sincerity and self-denial. But, for priests, who are known to have been, at first, the alms-men of the people, (and who mostly are still educated by the charity, and maintained by the benevolence of the laity) to talk of palaces, revenues, nay thrones and principalities, to be for assuming empire over their masters, and growing great by the poverty of the people, is such a stretch of arrogance and folly, as cannot be aggravated, as it would not be credible, did we not see it. The pretensions of the great Turk are not half so detestable.

Who would not rather be a slave to a monarch, than to a monk? The oppression of temporal tyrants never has been, never can be so great as the oppression of priests. Temporal tyrants only make their slaves as miserable as laymen can do. They take almost their all; but the little that is left, they leave them to use as they please. The priest, where he has power enough, exercises his tyranny over the bellies and palates of his more miserable vassals, and suffers them to eat (if he leave them any thing to eat) but what he pleases, and when he pleases.

In truth, the subjects of priests, abroad, are in a viler state than the priests black-cattle. They are worse fed, and not more knowing.

Can you deny, gentlemen, that the more power the priest possesses, just so much the more men suffer in their souls and bodies? Nor can it be otherwise. Power produces pride and debauchery in the clergy, and vassalage begets baseness and poverty in the people. Whatever is gained to the clergy, is gained from the laity; so that for them to be rich, we must be beggars; that they may be lords, we must be slaves. This I take to be self-evident.

Will you, or can you say, gentlemen, that those claims are conducing to the welfare of mankind; which, wherever they prevail, do effectually divest mankind of every thing that sweetens human life, and renders it desirable, or indeed supportable? Is that power for our benefit, which disarms us of our faculties, crows our minds with slavish fears, and gives us up a prey to those men, whose strength lies in our weakness, whose prosperity is owing to our undoing? this is what it has always done, and what it does at this day in Spain, Italy, and other priest-ridden countries; and this is what it would as effectually do in England, if Englishmen would suffer it.

These claims of yours, gentlemen, have done you great prejudice. They have made men afraid of your spirit, which seems to them to be merciless and insatiable. So that, if you are begrudged what you have, you may thank yourselves; it is owing to your claiming what you ought not to have. If a clergyman enjoy the tythes of part of my estate, by virtue of the law; and not content with that, would have tythes of the whole, in spite of the law; it is natural enough for me to think that the man is a knave, who would have no man's property secured by the law but his own.

Nothing is more common with you than to call the impropriations of the abbey-lands, by the dreadful name of sacrilege. You say, some of you have said it in print, and many more in the pulpit, that such impropriation was robbing the church. What church, gentlemen? Was it not the church of Rome? And are you of that church? It is certain, that the reformed protestant church of England never possessed

any of these lands. And how you, who are protestants, and not successors to the monks, can hold from the popish monks, by divine right, lands and immunities, which these gluttonous and cheating vermin acquired by diabolical rogueries; is such a riddle as can only come from ecclesiasticks, but can never be solved by laymen. Did you ever hear, gentlemen, that the primitive preachers of Christ, set up for being heirs to the riches and revenues of the heathen temples, when they were deserted or demolished? And, in my opinion, these pagan revenues were more honestly got, as well as more innocently used, than the lands and income of the popish monasteries.

Our gentlemen of this cast have long provoked one part of the world, long deceived the other, by their cant of divine right; which, though a very jest in itself, and long since exploded, is a title which they fix to all their possessions, let them come by them how they will. This is shameful boldness. It is certain, that the gospel has not given you one foot of land, or one shilling of money; nor did ever God Almighty appear personally to do it by word of mouth. Your church is a creature of the constitution, you are creatures of the law: and you must evidently belye divine right, if you pretend to derive from thence, what all the world sees you owe to secular bounty; I will not say to devout frauds.

If you could be but persuaded to reconcile your principles and pretensions to the security and happiness of mankind, all mankind would be reconciled to you and your pretensions. I do not remember to have ever heard the clergy contemned, where they did not first deserve contempt. When any depart from the meekness of ministers, no body will pay them the regard due to ministers. Such who intermeddle in every thing, will be respected in nothing. They who oppose every publick good, every action favourable to liberty, and beneficent to the world, will be deemed foes to liberty, and to the world. Such who promote strife, and persecution, will be reckoned enemies to peace and charity; and those who are at the head of all publick mischiefs, will themselves be thought a publick mischief. If they promote the known principles, and endeavour to support the known and main pillars of popery, can they expect to be treated as protestants? If they promote rebellion, and practise perjury, can they either be accounted good subjects or Christians? And if they are the patrons of tyranny, and the promoters of immorality, what quarter can they expect to find in a free country, or amongst men of virtue?

If you ask me, why all this from a layman to his ghostly guides? The answer is ready—the work was necessary; and, gentlemen, those of your order made it necessary. The interest of truth and liberty was concerned, and indeed at stake, by the constant attacks of those of your robe upon them: which attacks were so far from being disavowed by you, that the wicked authors of them were not only treated as the chief champions of the church's cause; but all who opposed them have been fallen upon with the sternest outrage, with the utmost bitterness of spirit; together with lying calumnies, uncharitable suggestions, and base and brutish language; their usual weapons, offensive and defensive.

It is worth while to mention the great want of sincerity in the conduct of such men on this occasion. Whenever they think it season-

ble, in conversation, to uphold the mad principles of hickes, and of the other protestant papists and nonjurors, (though, if ever there was such a thing as blasphemy in the world, it is to be met with in their writings, in the most daring colours) they never fail to shew themselves their advocates.. But when they think that a defence of these reveries will do a prejudice to the cause, with those of your people, who have a notion of religion and the reformation; or among men, who, they know, can expose these reveries: then, gentlemen, they either shamelessly deny that these writers maintain what they do maintain; or say, that the clergy are not answerable for the whimsies of particular doctors.

These dishonest shifts, these base practises, compounded of knavery and lies, are common amongst too many of your order. Yes, gentlemen, to the disgrace of common candour, and the reproach of religion, they are very common amongst the high clergy. I myself have frequently found them; and, I believe, that every one, who has had any conversation with them, has as frequently found them.

Now, that these principles (several of which I have already laid together in this dedication) are asserted in the books of your non-swearing and for-swearing brethren, I appeal to the books themselves: that they are impious, false, anti-Christian, and destructive of human society, of all social virtues, and all civil happiness, I appeal to common sense, and to the known state of those miserable countries where they prevail: and, that they have been either adopted, or approved by all the high clergy, I appeal to their many quotations from them, and to their constantly opposing every proceeding against them.

Gentlemen, it is of much consequence to you, to clear yourselves from the imputation of maintaining or adhering to such ungodly, such mischievous tenets: tenets, which without consulting the revealed will of God, appear detestable to the common light of reason: tenets, which abrogate the justice and mercy of God, and call his very being in question; and tenets, which would forever banish all peace and security from amongst men, and from the face of the earth. Consider, that you cannot take one step in asserting or countenancing them, without direct perjury. You have, upon oath, renounced all power, of any kind or sort whatsoever, but what you receive from the king and the law. Will you, after this solemn appeal to God, by an oath, sacred amongst barbarians and infidels, appeal to all the world that you are perjured, by maintaining, as too many do in their writings and sermons, that they have a power, which they neither derive from the king nor the law?

Sure it must be a melancholly reflection to these gentlemen, in point of credit and reputation (for I say nothing of conscience) that, whilst they thus distinguish themselves from low-churchmen, whose great crime consists in not mocking God, and leaping over conscience and oaths; they do, at the same time, distinguish themselves from Christianity itself, which, above all other religions, disclaims power, and more than all other religions, abhors insincerity and false swearing.

Can you, gentlemen, reconcile their behaviour, since the revolution, to the understanding of the people, or to any man's conscience but their own? If the doctrine of hereditary right be true, as many of them eternally and fiercely contend, how could they swear to Princes

made by act of Parliament ? And if the doctrine of passive obedience be true, how came they to swear to a government founded upon open and evident resistance, and to be instrumental themselves in that resistance ? Their particular behaviour to his present majesty, cannot yet be forgot. Be so good to let us know, what security he found from their oaths ; or what assistance the high clergy gave him against the late rebellion, in pursuance of these oaths ? Can men who shew, by glaring actions, that they value not their own souls, do any good to the souls of other men ?

If you would clear yourselves from the imputation of supporting or favouring such monstrous principles, you must do it openly and avowedly, in full and express words, free from that equivocation which some of your order are much suspected of, upon the most solemn and sacred occasions. You have been ready enough to censure many good books, and many worthy propositions : be ingenuous for this once, gentlemen ; expose the blasphemies of those of your own body, and brand the authors of them with those names of infamy which they deserve, and which you never want whenever you think fit to call names. And if you fairly renounce ill company, you will not be censured, as you have been, for not censuring their impieties. The convocation at Oxford, in the days of tyranny, were sufficiently forward and explicit in damning, by their detestable decree, since worthily burnt by the proper hand of the common hangman, by order of the legislature ; I say, that black assembly were forward and clear enough in damning all those principles of liberty, which ever have been and ever will be the principles of wise men and free men. Consult your own reputation and the welfare of mankind, by treading in steps directly contrary to those of that wicked assembly.

I cannot pass over in silence, that shameful want of charity found amongst too many of you, and every day complained of to no purpose. Allowing charity to be a Christian grace (and the Apostle calls it the highest) I would be glad to know in what instance you practise that grace yourselves, or promote it in others. As to such who deny the regular means of salvation to all communions, except their own and that of Rome, they bring this charge home to their own door ; since their courtesy to those of the same spirit with themselves, and their good opinion of them, is not charity, but self-love and faction. Highway-men, no doubt, call one another honest fellows, as frequently and habitually as other men do ; whereas their honesty is no other than a wicked fidelity to a nest and confederacy of rogues, and they are only honest to their fellow-thieves. But true honesty is the same to all men, and to all men alike.

The like may be said of charity ; it is tried and exercised upon those who are of a persuasion different from ours. But to flatter and be complaisant to those of the same imaginations, or the same craft with ourselves, merely because they are of the same craft, is such a new-fangled charity, as would beat the old Christian charity of St. Paul quite out of the world. And yet that this is the true cause and the true state of modern orthodox charity, appears abundantly from hence, that the most wicked good church man has more complement paid him, and more favour shewn him, than the most righteous, most godly dissenter. Nay, by the servile court paid by many, very many, to

DEDICATION.

those of their patrons, who lived libertines, and died atheists ; and by their barbarous usage of peaceable, religious dissenters, (blameable only for being dissenters) it would seem as if virtue were no longer the object of their affection, nor vice of their aversion.

For God's sake, gentlemen, abandon this damning spirit, which is a contradiction to religion, and a reproach to humanity ; assume charity for all men, or drop all pretensions to Christianity ; learn to be temperate and well bred, or cease claiming to be gentlemen : leave reviling, as you would be thought preachers and exhorters ; and, as you would be thought successors to the apostles, concern not yourselves with worldly power, of which the apostles had none.

You would not sure be thought a set of ecclesiasticks, detached both from Christians and heathens ; and yet, by contending not only for worldly power, but for independent worldly power, superiour to all the powers of the world, you shew, as many of you as do so, that you are a discredit to Christians, and yet are worse than heathens. It was the good counsel of Bishop Hall to Laud, who was confounding all things human and divine, that he would be either fish or flesh ; either throw away his wings, or pull out his claws. For God's sake, gentlemen, tell us what religion you are of ?—I mean such of you as assert the positions above quoted. To what class of religions, think you, these men belong ? To none, certainly, that ever was in the world. They cannot even make consistent papists, though that seems to be their highest ambition. Their popery, I own, is true popery, and yet it is popery without a pope. I cannot speak so favourably of the Christianity which they pretend to ; though that too is Christianity without Christ, who was all meekness, humility, and love ; omnipotent, but disclaimed all power ; infallible, and yet would judge no man—Are you, gentlemen, his successors ? do your champions resemble this picture ? they are poor, frail erring, mortal men, and yet would act as if they were omnipotent, and dictate as if they were infallible. Good God ! gentlemen, what madness, to deal thus with us, before they had burnt our Bibles, or put out our eyes.

Do we not see clergymen actuated by as savage and unreasonable passions as any set of men living ? and would you pretend to govern absolutely those who have at least as much virtue, sense and sobriety as yourselves ; who, as it is plain from your lives, cannot govern yourselves better than others ; have we not seen their heads as deep in crimes, as the heads and hands of any society of men upon earth ; and can you expect that we will trust the most important care in the world, the care of our souls, to men who take no care of their own ; or rather do not seem to think that they have any ? what opinion, think you, can we have of their power with Heaven, when we behold them incessantly contending for, and pursuing power upon earth, which is inconsistent with the ways of Heaven ? It is time, high time, gentlemen, to give over, and to remember that we neither want eyes nor memory.

There has been a long and almost general charge against the clergy of all ages and countries, for neglecting to preach and enforce as much and as clearly as they ought, the great doctrines of morality, the best mark of religion, and the best stay of human society : It is indeed religion itself ; and that religion which does not produce morality, deserves another name. Morality is the only religion which human so-

ciety, considered as such, has any occasion to see practised. If a man be really moral, neither the civil magistrate, nor his fellow-citizens, ought to have any concern what he believes, or how he believes. Our actions are in our power, but our thoughts are not, no more than our dreams. Belief necessarily follows evidence; and where the evidence does not appear sufficient, a man cannot believe if he would. There was virtue in the world before there was orthodoxy in it; which hard, equivocal, priestly word, has done more mischief to mankind, than all the tyrants that ever plagued the earth. This is worthy the consideration of the laity. Yes, gentlemen, orthodoxy has made many tyrants, and exceeded all. What can be said to this fact?

I allow that priests often contend for good works; but, without a paradox, the good works which they contend for, are, for the most part, not only not morality, but, on the contrary, are often very wicked and sinful. The endowing of churches and monasteries is, for example, with them a great good work; and yet it has generally proved a mischievous liberality, which evidently hurt religion and human society, and frequently destroyed both. I call upon you, gentlemen, to shew where and when the Christian religion ever thrived or gained by riches? I, on my side, can shew that they have been always poison to it. Riches first made priests rampant, and such priests soon defaced and ruined religion, but still more or less effectually, as their revenues and power were greater or smaller. Christianity flourished most when it had neither worldly priests nor worldly endowments. Will you deny this? In short, their preaching good works has been generally preaching themselves; who were the chief gainers by them. And as to those good works which did not promise any advantage to the clergy they either always opposed them, or never encouraged them. We cannot forget your behaviour at the beginning of our present charity-schools, how you every where opposed them, till you had got the management of them into your own hands; and now you as violently promote them out of other mens pockets. Whether your government of those schools promotes the welfare of the common-wealth, (if you can bear that word) appears abundantly from the bitter and disaffected spirit found in them.

By morality, therefore, is meant a thing quite different from such good works. Morality is natural religion, which prompts us to do good to all men, and to all men alike, without regard to their speculations, any more than to their clothes, or to the colour of their hair; which is as much in their power as their faith is. Morality is social virtue, or rather the mother of all social virtues: It wishes and promotes unlimited and universal happiness to the whole world: It regards not a Christian more than a Jew or an Indian, any further than as he is a better citizen; and not so much, if he be not.

Barbeyrac, in his excellent preface to his translation of Puffendorf *de jure naturæ & gentium*, has shewn us, by a fine detail of passages, how the pagan, the jewish, and too many Christian priests, have all ever agreed in concealing, disguising, mangling, calumniating, and opposing the eternal principles of morality or natural religion. The religion of these holy hirelings consisted either in a long rout of ceremonies, as tedious as ridiculous; or in certain abstruse points, which could never be known, and were not worth knowing; always in great pomp and

pride ; and in dominion, wherever they could get it. It was either a religion of the body, or a religion of the imagination, or a religion of shew, profit and terror. In fine, the blessed clubs of ecclesiasticks of all religions, in whatever else they differed, yet always accorded in this, that the religion which they contrived, agreed neither with heaven nor earth, neither with reason nor good-humour, but only fitted themselves and their own views.

Mr. Barbeyrac, in his preface, has given us a diverting specimen of the absurdities and ravings of those reverend old gentlemen, whom we call the fathers. And in all the instances that he brings, it is hard, if not impossible to say, whether the uncharitableness, roguery, or stupidity of these old saints, appears uppermost.

This preface is ever way so excellent, that I have prevailed upon a friend of mine, a gentleman of Gray's-inn, to translate it into english, for the instruction of the laity. A reverend divine or two have translated the book itself ; but no divine has yet thought fit to give us the preface. My countrymen may therefore soon expect it from him, with an introduction.

Gentlemen, I have but two questions to ask of you, and I have done. Pray to what is it owing, that the usual spirit and zeal of this nation against popery, are now quite extinct ; insomuch, that in the neighbourhood of great popish families, your flocks grow daily thinner, and the mass-houses stronger : as I am able to shew in some instances ? and, secondly, what is become of the bundle of papers sent by Mr. Leslie to a former convocation, containing a project for a union between the protestant church of England and the popish church of France ? And I desire you will acquaint the world with the reasons, why no notice or censure was passed upon them.

I shall say nothing here of the usual way taken to answer antagonists, not by reason or scripture, but by downright force, hardships and oppression. The sermon, called, the craftsmen, has done this to my hand, and I have now first added it to this edition ; I therefore hast to conclude, and

G.

I am, gentlemen,
your most humble and
most obedient servant,
INDEPENDENT WHIG.

PREFACE.

IT is with books, as with men ; their character cannot long be sustained by extrinsic aid. For an author, in a preface to a work, to attempt to extenuate its faults and defects, is generally useless. If they are inconsiderable, they are not deserving of notice ; but if they are important, and have an essential influence upon the subject of the work, it is an admission, that he is expecting to trouble the public with a publication, that is not worthy of their notice ; and that either from its defects, it will present but a partial view of the subject, or from its faults an erroneous one.

If, in general, it is useless for an author to explain *what* he has written, it is in most instances, more useless still, to explain *why* he has written at all. The motives of men are not to be ascertained from their words, but from their deeds ; and a performance which does not sufficiently exhibit the views and motives of the author, must be poor and imbecile indeed, and marked with features of darkness and ambiguity, that can only have proceeded from design.

These observations with respect to authors of original works, will apply in many respects, although not perhaps, with as much truth, to the editors, or publishers of the works of others. We need seldom enquire for the motives of those who republish books—it is a trade. The situation of an author and an editor, is very different. The latter cannot be influenced by vanity, or a laudable pursuit of literary fame ; however highly the work he publishes may be esteemed, he acquires no credit from it ; much less can it be to him “ a monument more durable than brass.” There are but two motives, by which an editor can be supposed to be influenced in any publication : namely, gain, and a design for a more general introduction of the work in society. As there is a presumption in favour of the former consideration, the influence of the latter will not be credited, independent of circumstances that have the authority of evidence. As in this publication the expectation of profit has been disclaimed, we would notice two facts in support of this pretension : and, as evidence that the publication was undertaken with a view to furnish the thinking part of society a valuable work. These facts are, first, that the work was remarkably scarce ; and secondly, that it is not of a description calculated to ob-

tain so general encouragement as many others, that invite enterprise in this line.

As this is the first American Edition of the "Independent Whig," and as it is a work that is written with great art, energy, and ability, and as the subjects of religion and the clergy are treated with unusual freedom, it may not, perhaps, be amiss to suggest some considerations as the grounds of the opinion, that its general introduction into our society, will have a salutary influence upon religion, liberty, and social happiness. Religious systems will always be considered by men of sense and candour, in two distinct points of view ; the one, as respects their authenticity, the other, as respects their practical, moral tendency. There is no necessary identity of these ideas ; as it is evident, that a system not well authenticated as to a divine origin and character, may have a favourable moral tendency ; neither, on the other hand, is it an established axiom, that a system which is founded in truth will *necessarily* have the effect of rendering mankind more virtuous and more happy. We do not know how far it is a part of the divine economy, with relation to human affairs, that we should grope in darkness and error. As light may be too intense for the organs of sight, so there may be a moral light too great for the human mind. Any system, however, *which is a special communication of the Divine will*, must be adapted to the moral faculties of man ; and necessary to his happiness here, or his salvation hereafter, or to both. Such a system must be *necessary*, or it would not exist, and what necessity can there be, but one or both of the objects here noticed.

It will hardly be contended, that it is necessary for our salvation and happiness *hereafter*, that we be under the influence of a system that is destructive to human happiness in this life. This is not only unreasonable and absurd, but is an impeach of the Divine character, and is also contrary to experience. It is admitted by all (except the Jews, who consider the prospects of future bliss alike with all mankind) that those who possess the most piety and virtue in this life, have the best claims to the spiritual inheritance of eternal felicity ; and is it not certain, at least as a general truth, that the man of virtue and piety enjoys, in this life, the most solid happiness. It would seem, therefore, that although the truth of a religious system is a thing distinct from its moral tendency, and the effect it may have upon human virtue and happiness, yet that this distinction cannot exist in a system that originated from divine revelation ; as such a system must be *necessary*, and a part of the moral order and economy of the universe, and so adapted to the situation and moral faculties of man, as to have an evident tendency to render mankind more virtuous and more happy in this life, and to brighten, with the enlivening blaze of hope, the prospect of futurity. The happiness of mankind in this life, or in a future state of existence, can be the only objects of a divine revelation : and are not these objects compatible ? and do they not proceed from the same fountain, virtue and piety ?

These principles, if correct, will afford a very powerful argument either to support or to subvert any system of religion, that is claimed as a divine revelation. It is considered as objectionable to go into an argument, even in support of the authenticity of the Christian system, because it is supposed that it ought not to be *doubted*. This princi-

ple is both false and dangerous upon the first view of it; and it is certainly a bad expedient, to attempt to support *divine truth* by a principle founded in *falsehood*, and which is an infringement of the moral rights of man. What would be the consequences of this principle, if adopted as a rule of action in life? Do not the most strenuous advocates of this principle disregard its authority, when applied to any other system than the one they have adopted? Those who teach the doctrine, that we should believe without investigation, are either very blind themselves, or wish to blind others, as there can be no rational belief, but what is the result of enquiry, and the force of conviction. Although it is not intended to go into an argument in support of the Christian system, yet it deserves consideration, whether most of the pretended patrons and supporters of Christianity have not done more to render its authenticity suspicious, and to weaken its authority, than all which has been effected by the efforts of its avowed opposers?

The kindness of an indiscrete friend is frequently more dangerous than the hostility of an enemy; but where indiscretion is the result of personal interest, the case is still worse; and, under such circumstances, it most frequently happens that we injure the cause that we intend to serve. It is no objection to this consideration that Christianity is a divine revelation, and a rule of faith and practice unto all men. The purer the liquor, the more liable it is to be corrupted by an impure vessel. Are not the clergy men? and like unto other men; and being in most instances drawn from the common mass of mankind as people are to other employments by the views of profit? It can hardly be contended that they have not a personal temporal interest connected with the religion they profess and teach, nothing is more visible than the effects of this interest; and nothing can be more deleterious to the cause of Christianity. It is to the influence, interest, and ambition, that we can trace most of the errors and vices of the clergy. Having abandoned all other hopes, their fame and their fortune are to arise from their zeal and exertions in the cause of their religion.—Personal *interests* associate themselves with the idea of personal *rights*, and hence the clergy of all religious establishments founded upon a principle that favours their temporal interests and ambition in every age, and country, have treated the subject of religion as though they had a private property in it.—Hence religious instruction hath become a trade, and religion itself merchandize—and hence the priesthood have trafficked in virtue and vice, and sold the right to every species of criminality—hence they have identified their own faith and practice with the doctrines and morals of a holy religion—hence their vanity, and over-meaning conduct of themselves, and their endeavours to be deemed sacred by the ignorant multitude—hence their peevishness of temper, and the extreme impatience with which they bear contradiction, and a furious and implacable spirit of persecution—hence the innumerable pious frauds, and in fine, it is from the interest and ambition of the priesthood, that we are to ascribe all the crimes, with which they have been disgraced, whether they have proceeded from violence or fraud. It is not to be expected that any of us should be exempt from ambition, and the most worthy men that have ever lived, have not been esteemed such, from their not possessing ambition, but from their having an ambition only to do good, but the ambition of the

clergy, has most frequently led them to promote ignorance and superstition, and an implicit belief in their doctrines, for the purpose of extending their influence and authority. Are they not revered most by the ignorant ? and is not their authority greatest where the authority of the people is least ? and are not their revenues great in proportion to the extent of their influence and authority ?

These considerations are obvious, and strike the mind forcibly, and are in general too strong for humanity : and hence there is no class of men with whom ambition is so dangerous, as the clergy. In despotic governments, they will always be found to league with the oppressors, and are themselves both an instrument and an object of the oppression. In free governments the ambitious class of the clergy, (for there is generally one order which will acquire a pre-eminence) will take that course with relation to the government which will best promote their own interests, and if they are ever found to support a popular government, it is not from a regard to its principles, but with a view to conciliate, favour, and thus expect to be paid in legal privileges for the support they afford. Not content with *authority* which they always possess, they will strive to acquire power ; and where they cannot awe the civil rulers, they will attempt to persuade them, that it is necessary for the security of the state, to build up the church, and to secure the interests of religion with obligatory and penal laws. If an absolute church establishment cannot be obtained, they will accept of a *qualified* one ; and where there is too much wisdom in a people to grant them even this, they will not fail in their efforts, to obtain various charters and acts of incorporation, giving them extensive corporate powers.

The clergy of one denomination in a state will always be united and form but one body, which will be animated by one soul, and like other classes of men they are governed by interest and ambition, but the misfortune is that the interest, the greatness, and the influence of their order, in a temporal point of view, depend upon the ignorance, the superstition, and the slavery of the people. And hence an ambitious priesthood that are seeking to build up their own temporal interests, (and all for the glory of God) are a class of men peculiarly dangerous in a free country ; that their influence is great, cannot be doubted, and that this influence is exerted to advance the interests of their own order is equally certain, which leads them to promote superstition and ignorance, and an implicit belief in their own doctrines. That freedom of enquiry and thought, and a free circulation of ideas, constitute the only atmosphere in which civil liberty can breathe, is demonstrated by universal history ; and every restraint upon thinking and reasoning with freedom, from whatever cause it may proceed, is an obstruction to civil liberty. *Authority* has all the force of law, and it is considered as criminal even to doubt points that are established only by the authority of councils, canons, creeds and articles. *Superstition* is not only destructive to civil liberty, as being the child of ignorance, but it destroys the natural boundaries of virtue and vice, and creates a moral world of its own, which is altogether artificial. When the practical piety and virtues of a people who have enjoyed the blessings of liberty, such as integrity, charity, benevolence, and all the fine feelings of humanity, are absorbed, or rendered of an inferior character, by the pretended piety and virtue of abstract and implicit faith, and the pre-

ended merit of ceremonies and rituals, they must be ripe for despotism.

If the liberties of this country are ever destroyed, (which God forbid) it must be effected either by external or internal violence, or by gradual corruption and perversion of the moral sentiments of the people; and if from the latter cause the influence of the clergy will not probably be least considerable. The aspiring and ambitious part of our clergy have never been friendly to the Constitution of the United States, because, forsooth, it has done nothing for them. As well might it be supposed that the monks of the sixteenth century, who were despoiled of their revenues by Henry the 8th of England, could have felt friendly to that despotic monarch, as to suppose that an ambitious clergy can feel friendly to a government that has done nothing to promote the interest of their order. The feelings of many of our clergy, with relation to religion and civil liberty, have been pretty fully exhibited within a few years past.

It deserves very serious consideration, whether the missionary zeal which characterizes the religious spirit of the present time, is not too nearly allied to the spirit of fanaticism and disorder of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, from whence sprang the crusades and holy wars, to promise much good to the cause of humanity. Is it not morally impossible to introduce Christianity among a people, who have made no progress in civilization, and have not even attained to a knowledge of the primary arts of life? And if it could possibly be introduced, could it do any good? and would not the spirit of peace, charity, and benevolence, which is the essence of Christianity, be perverted to a spirit of ferocity, cruelty, and revenge? Clovis, King of the Franks, after his conversion to Christianity, on hearing a sermon preached to him by the bishop of Rheims, upon the sufferings and the death of Christ, is said to have exclaimed, "if I had been there with my Franks, it should not have happened." Does Christianity prevail in a greater portion of the earth at the present period, than it did in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and before the conquests of the Saracens, notwithstanding the great missionary exertions? What have been the fruits of the exertions of the swarms of gospelizers, that have been sent to the East, and other parts of the Pagan world? Is it not demonstrated by universal history, that the religion of an entire people, in whatever state of civilization they may be, is not changed any more than their manners and their language, except by conquests, and other great political events? These considerations would seem to afford some evidence, that the missionary zeal of some orders of clergy, which involves a vast accumulation of funds, is *stimulated*, in part at least, from a regard to their own temporal interests.

The violence of these feelings towards the person and the government of the late Emperour of France, who had established universal religious toleration, was a circumstance rather unfavourable to their character; but what shall we say to that extravagance of joy which was manifested at those events in Europe, which restored the Pope to his power, and re-established the mother church, with all its catholic powers, and the holy Inquisition? No man can rejoice at events calculated to afflict humanity, and to destroy the dearest rights of human nature, without a disposition highly wicked, or an understanding strang-

ly perverted. But for *Protestant* divines, who have considered the Pope as Anti-Christ, and the great enemy of the Protestant faith, and the church of Rome as the "abomination of all abominations," to rejoice at the restoration of the one, and the re-establishment of the other, seems at first view to be altogether unaccountable. If Protestantism is different from Popery, these events must be as injurious to religion, as to the cause of liberty and the happiness of mankind. However Popery and Protestantism may differ in other respects, they agree essentially in these, that the clergy of both (with some exceptions on the part of the latter) have made a trade, business, and profit of religious instruction, and have identified their own temporal interest with the glory of God and the interests of Christianity; and it is to these considerations, perhaps, that we are to ascribe the sympathy which many of our clergy have manifested, at the humiliation of the Pope, and their joy at his restoration to his power and revenues.

Human nature is the same at all times and in all places; and the same moral, like the same physical causes, will uniformly produce the same effects. The sacerdotal office is assumed from interest and ambition, in this country as well as in others; and if clerical ambition and interest have not produced the same effects here, as elsewhere, it is owing to the obstruction of the laws, the freedom of the press, and the superiour intelligence of the people, and not because they have not the same tendency. But since their tendency is certain and uniform, and proceeds from fixed and eternal moral causes, it cannot be too much guarded against; more especially, as ignorance and superstition, and an implicit confidence in clerical doctrines, and an abandonment of thought and enquiry, and a perversion of moral principle, are more dangerous in a free country than in any other.

But not only do the interests of civil liberty, of moral principle, and of social happiness require, that the lives, the conduct, and the doctrines of the clergy should be freely examined, and when exceptional, freely exposed, but the purity of the Christian religion, and even the establishment of its authenticity depend in a great measure, upon it. Christianity, considered as a divine revelation, must have been instituted for the interest and happiness of mankind; but if it is perverted by the clergy to their own interests, so that it fails to answer these ends, it will be natural to judge of it from a rule which it has itself furnished, viz. that a tree is to be known by its fruit. What an argument does this afford to infidelity! How natural is it for a person, who disclaims the authority of every religion but the primitive religion of nature, to say to the Christian, you admit yourself that the tree is known by its fruit; and what have been the fruits of your religion? Look but for a moment into its history: what find we there but contentions, strife, wars, horrors, cruelties, oppressions, violence, and blood, fraud, artifice, treachery, deceit, imposture, and every species of criminality. These charges are but too true; and how can those answer them, who are in the habit of identifying the doctrines and the conduct of the clergy, with the pure principles and heavenly charity of the Christian religion? And an ambitious and interested clergy have, not only from their lives and doctrines, weakened the authority of Christianity, and attached suspicion to its authenticity, but also from their scholastick wranglings and absurd speculations. They have

identified their own ideas and expositions, with the scriptures of divine truth, and considered it equally a piece of unwarrantable scepticism to doubt the one, as the other. This arrogance and impiety would be extravagant enough, if there was any uniformity in their ideas, but when it is considered, that they have never been able to agree among themselves in scarcely one important point, it is absurd and ridiculous in the extreme. Having disregarded the authority of common sense, and thrown off humanity, they have been lost in labyrinths of error, and wandered in the mazes of delirium. In order to support their incomprehensible notions and absurdities, they have dethroned reason, the image of the Divinity in man, impeached the laws and the lights of nature, and created a physical and a moral world of their own.

The ground upon which they have attempted to support revelation, is directly calculated to overturn it; they have set up religion in *opposition* to reason, and to nature; and of course they cannot both exist together; the authority of the one must be sacrificed by the other: thus intending to subvert the authority of nature, which is primitive and elder scripture, written by the finger of the Deity himself, to which revelation is supplemental, it being a further communication of the divine will, with relation to his works and providence. To consider revelation in the light of a confirmation and extension of the religion of nature, would be its greatest support. But what an argument does it afford to infidelity, to set religion in opposition to nature! It is evident, we think, to all reflecting minds, that the exposure of the nonsense, the absurdities, and the impieties, the interested views, and the vicious conduct of the clergy, is so far from having an injurious effect upon religion, that it is the only course calculated to preserve its purity, and to guard it from degeneracy and corruption. Those who cannot abstract the dogmas, and absurd speculations of the clergy from the principles of Christianity, and who draw their ideas of practical piety and Christian charity, from the lives and teaching of an interested and ambitious priesthood, must have very imperfect ideas of Christianity.

Many are sensible of the impositions, and the usurpation of the clergy, and the tendency of clerical ambition to pervert and corrupt Christianity, who think it however inexpedient to oppose them, lest it weaken the influence of religion, and the authority of moral obligation, and remove all restraints but the force of law. Nothing can be more incorrect than this idea. The great body of the people will never have any opinion of their own, upon the subjects of religion and morals, so far as they are of a speculative nature, but the practical principles of religious and moral obligation, can be justly attained by the multitude, so far as they depend upon human *sentiments*, as we need only appeal to the unperverted feelings of humanity. But the great evil is, that those who think and reason from selfishness, ambition, conceit, pride, or other frailties of humanity, have laboured to pervert the genuine sentiments of nature, and sublime and mysterious errors when once promulgated, may find support from various causes, till finally they are established by *authority*, and transmitted for ages.—Those who can teach both by doctrine and example, that it was no sin to murder heretics, or those who thought differently from them—

selves, must have been under a strange perversion of human sentiment. Individuals of parts, have both a natural bias, and a strong temptation to support error rather than truth, as that favours their own ideas of superiority, while truth establishes the equality of nature. From the influence of selfishness and ambition, and the example of those possessing power, and superior parts, splendid and mysterious error, and artful and mischievous falsehood, so disguised and represented, as to awe, surprise, and fascinate the multitude, would have overspread the earth, and eradicated from humanity, every natural and genuine sentiment, upon which the dignity and happiness of mankind depend, had there not been in almost every age, some few individuals, uniting an unbounded benevolence with an unlimited genius.—It is to the efforts of men of this description, that we are to ascribe the present condition of human nature, and of human happiness—These men have always embraced liberal sentiments, being the sentiments of nature—and being the friends of mankind, they have been the opposers of civil and ecclesiastical usurpation and oppression, and the friends of civil liberty, the friend of equality, the friends of toleration, and the rights of conscience, the friends of moderation, and the friends of rational morality and religion. And let us be proud as Americans, that we can add some names to this immortal catalogue. The names of Franklin, Washington, Jefferson, Barlow, and others, friends of humanity, will not dishonour the most distinguished of the other hemispheres, Bacon, Locke, Hume, Rossare, Volney, Trenchard, Gordon and others.—Men of this description, possessing the most liberal sentiments, have been the most guarded, and exemplary in their conduct—so false is the opinion, that liberal sentiments lead to licentiousness.—On the contrary, have not the greatest bigots in all countries and ages, from Constantine the great, to Ferdinand the pious, or from Thomas A. Becket, to priest Norton, been guilty of the greatest crimes ; having from the influence of superstition and false chimeras got above humanity, they have lost all the genuine feelings of our nature.—Under these sentiments and views the American edition of the Independent Whig, is offered to the public ; it is *hoped* that it will meet with encouragement, and *expected* that it will do good.

The history of the Whig, and the circumstances under which it was first offered to the publick, may be learned in a great measure from the work itself.—It was an undertaking the early part of the last century, of an association of gentlemen, not more distinguished by their literature, and talents, than by their benevolence and humanity ; among whom, were Gordon and Trenchard, who were the principal authors. The work was originally published in weekly numbers, and although it experienced the most violent opposition, and attacks, from the bigots, and a legal hierarchy, alarmed at the idea of there being an attempt made, to guard against their usurpations, and an extension of their temporal interests and authority, yet it became very popular, especially, with the liberal part of society, who always consider that

tyranny, oppression, and extortion, are no part of real piety, and was continued until the numbers, when published, collectively comprised in the English editions of the work, four duodecimo volumes, of common size.—There have been several English editions, and the work has been enlarged, and improved by the authors, but this is the first American edition, and it is believed, that at this time, the work is not to be found in any book store in this country. To gratify a curiosity so natural to mankind, there is subjoined to each number the first letter of the name, of the author. It was thought best to publish the text entire, although perhaps there are some chapters that might have been omitted without an injury to an American edition of the work ; neither has it been perceived, that the work would have been essentially more perfect, by an addition of notes, which would have rendered it more voluminous and increase the expense.—In this edition cheapness and convenience have been studied and it was particularly desirable with a view to both, that the work should be comprised in one volume.

HARTFORD, 1816.

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THE

INDEPENDENT WHIG.

NUMBER 1.

INTRODUCTION.

WHOEVER goes about to reform the world, undertakes an office obnoxious to malice, and beset with difficulties. It speaks a confidence of his own capacity, which prompts him to set up for the school-master of mankind; and it infers a charge of corruption or ignorance in his pupils, out of which he assumes to whip them. As every man has a good conceit of his own merit, he thinks himself undervalued by instruction, and is provoked by correction. The confession of our own weakness, and that of another's better sense, is generally both contained in the taking of advice, which is seldom taken for that reason.

Besides, blindness and prejudice are seldom to be resigned but with pain; and therefore, for the most part, are not resigned at all. It is but an unacceptable civility to offer to let in the rays of understanding upon those minds, which are used to subsist in the dark. It is like opening day-light upon a nest of owls; it always sets them a screeching.

The difference, however, is considerable between natural and acquired ignorance, and the last is much more incurable than the first. The one is capable, and often willing, to be informed; whereas the other thinks itself above it, and is too wise to learn. There can be no cure for one who is taught to be a blockhead; his ignorance is the fruit of instruction, and has cost him great pains; and so his pride is engaged to support it. As he has improved his mind into learned darkness, he stands upon his guard against common sense, is proof against all the assaults of reason, and scorns its power. If he do not take you for his enemy, and use you accordingly; yet, at least, he will pity your mistakes, and perhaps pray for your illumination.

It will probably be said, by some of my readers, that I here describe myself and my own performances, and perhaps with too much truth. There lived, not long since, a poet, who made excellent criticisms upon the most applauded plays, and afterwards writ one himself obnoxious to them all.

But neither these, nor any other difficulties, or discouragements, shall hinder me from the generous attempt of endeavouring to reform mankind. I have the magnanimity to face them all, and set about the work ; though I am sufficiently sensible of the greatness of the design, and have long wished that some abler genius would have undertaken it.

I confess there have been some seeming attempts of this kind, which were carried on with great dexterity and wit, and brought great credit and other valuable advantages to the authors ; but I should be glad to know what service they have done to the publick. The exposing of small faults can do but small service ; and people may be singular in their humours, and vain in their dress, without hurting human society. A beau may wear a fine coat, and a gaudy sword-knot, without prejudicing the commonwealth, or indeed any one member of it : nor can I see any dreadful malignity in a hooped petticoat. A lady may keep a squirrel, and diversify her face with fifty patches on a side, without invading private or publick property. There is no mischief in a harmless snuff-box, or a diamond ring ; nor do laced clothes, or a clouded cane, prejudice trade ; nor the flirting of a fan shake our constitution. A terrible fellow with a long sword may be a peaceable neighbour ; and a coquet may salute her lap-dog, and yet not endanger our liberties.

These little sallies and excrescencies of humour, as they give real pleasure and happiness to the proprietors themselves, so they often entertain wiser people, who might otherwise grow too severe for want of a little laughing. And yet I will own, that many papers, upon that subject, have justly merited universal esteem and admiration.

But the greater and more important mischiefs, which afflict human society, have been, for the most part, left untouched by our finest writers. Priestcraft and tyranny have been seldom attacked by any, but rather flattered and supported. Mr. Saville is said to have replied to a Frenchman, who exulted upon the fine writings of his countrymen, that there were but two subjects in nature worth a wise man's thoughts, namely, religion and government, and they durst speak of neither. But it is our peculiar happiness to live in a country, where we may speak our minds freely and openly upon any subject, within the bounds of good manners and virtue ; which, I hope, I shall never transgress.

I own the Free-Thinker is a useful, as well as a fine paper. I have seen some discourses of his, which, in my opinion, are inimitable ; especially those upon superstition and enthusiasm. Most that come from him are instructive, and all are elegant. I hope so worthy a writer has suitable encouragement. I have not the good fortune to know that ingenious and deserving gentleman ; but I am told, that besides his capacity and publick principles, and the work he is now engaged in, he has done personal service to the government, which, in any other country, would entitle him to a very good station in it. If he have none in this, it is, no doubt, owing to the public spirit of the great ; who will, by no fault or courtesy of theirs, divert him from instructing his country twice a week. I shall only add upon this head, that as no man is so well qualified as the Free-Thinker himself to ex-

case his own plan, mine will not by any means interfere with his, as will be shown in my next number.

There was one weekly paper, which, had it gone on, would have prevented this; I mean the Free-Thinker Extraordinary. It breathed an uncommon spirit of public liberty, and shewed sufficiently the capacity of the author to do service to mankind. But when he had shewed his skill, and engaged our attention, he dropped us and his subject; and made it unnecessary, though dangerous, to recede from him. It was never asked why he undertook it; for every one saw the reasons and advantages of it: but why he deserted it, has been the subject of inquiry; and the rather, because it was evident that he wanted neither art nor materials.

For myself who have no manner of attachment to any party, I shall not be afraid to speak my mind of all, with that freedom which becomes truth and independency; and the flattering of power, in any shape or under whatsoever, shall be the last charge against me.

There is no power in names to consecrate persons or things, or to alter their nature; and yet the majority of mankind have always worshipped the idols of words and sounds; and a monosyllable has often done more than an army, towards keeping them under awe and servitude. In catholic countries, the word pope, or priest, carries with it more reverence than does the Old or New Testament, and more terror than an armed host. And lately in France, the words, Grand Monarque, or the Glory of the Grand Monarque, could keep a vast nation in slavery and wooden shoes, and carry a hundred thousand of them at a time to the slaughter.

This blind devotion to names, so inconsistent with true liberty, which shews itself in judging as well as acting, has also prevailed in this free nation to a degree shameful and dangerous. We know what terrible lengths the words church, clergy, divine right, and the like undefined nonsense, have gone towards enslaving us; and what a steady and ridiculous reverence is still paid to them, even when they are evidently applied to purposes the most impious and tyrannical.

Nor does this charge of worshipping words, lie altogether at the door of one party only. Even that side which boasts a greater share of reason and freedom, is manifestly guilty of the like idolatry to names and persons, and in instances of the greatest importance. They do not consider the speech, but the speaker; nor what is done, but the doer; and consequently praise by the great, in their own leaders, what they would loudly condemn in any others.

Credulity and implicit belief are equally dangerous in government as in religion. They have made the world slaves, and they keep it so. Every party has its pope, and some have several; who, like him at Rome, never fail to make an ill use of the faith of their followers, and deceive those who trust in them.

I have said thus much to apprise the reader that this will be an independent work, which will stoop to no party, nor have any friends or enemies, but such as make themselves so, by espousing the interests of truth or falsehood.

NUMBER 2.

The Design of this work.

RELIGION was designed by Heaven, for the benefit of men alone. It teaches us to moderate our desires, calm our passions, and be useful and beneficent to one another; and whatever does not contribute to those ends, ought not to be called by that name. For, Almighty God has infinite happiness in himself, which we can neither diminish nor add to; and therefore he can require nothing of us, but for our own sakes; nor command any thing but what tends to our own good, both here and hereafter.

I say it with the utmost sincerity, that no man living desires to pay a more true and affectionate esteem and reverence than myself to those clergymen, who answer this end of their institution, and whose lives and manners grace and adorn their profession and doctrine.

I thank God, I know many such; and perceive, with pleasure and transport, a noble spirit of liberty and true religion rising up among them; which will soon flame out far and wide, if it be not stifled by those, whose true interest and honour call upon them aloud to give it assistance and protection.

That profession must be always most honourable and deserving from mankind, which is most useful and advantageous to men. As it is therefore impossible to shew too much respect to virtuous clergymen, so the corrupt part of them cannot be too much exposed. Since the possession which ~~they~~ have of the fears and panic of superstitious people, and in the ~~tenderest~~ seasons ~~too~~, enable them to do the greatest mischief; the strongest antidotes ought to be applied to their poison. It will be ridiculous to call for protection from that character, which they constantly disgrace, and to ask assistance from the religion, which they neither believe nor practise.

I here list myself under the banners of the former sort; and design by this work to illustrate the beauty of Christianity, by exposing the deformity of priestcraft; to distinguish the good clergy from the bad, by giving to each his share of praise or infamy, according to the different deeds done by them. I will lose no opportunity of doing justice to the former, nor willingly to the latter.

In doing this, I shall go far backward, and taking things from the beginning, shew in the course of this work the infinite evils brought upon mankind, from age to age, by the pride and imposture of corrupt ecclesiasticks. I shall shew what a *Babel* they have built upon the foundation of Christ and his apostles, who were made to father doctrines which they never taught; and to countenance power which they always disclaimed. I shall shew by what arts and intrigues they came, from being almsmen of the people, to be masters of mankind; and how, by pretending to dispose of the *other world*, they actually usurped and ruled *this*.

I shall shew, that notwithstanding Christianity was first propagated by miracles and mildness only, and the teachers of it had no power

but to persuade ; making it withal appear, in the whole course of their lives and preaching, that they sought no manner of personal advantage, or any manner of jurisdiction over their hearers and converts ; yet they who, without their inspiration and manners, called themselves their successors, did by virtue of their names, lay insolent claim to dominion, and carried all things before them, by the dint of terror and excommunication.

I shall shew that though the clergy, like other militia, were raised and paid for protecting mankind from their spiritual enemy, yet they soon made use of the sword put into their hands against their masters, and set up for themselves. I shall shew that notwithstanding the whole end of their institution was to make men wiser and better, yet wherever they prevailed, debauchery and ignorance also prevailed ; and the constant lesson they taught was blind belief and blind obedience, of both which they made themselves the objects. So that superstition was an inseparable creature of their power, and the perpetual issue of it ; and tainted morals and darkened minds were the great props of their dominion. A good understanding, and an inquisitive spirit, led directly to heresy ; a pious life was of ill example, and a reproach to the clergy ; and if any one gave offence this way, it was but calling him *heretick*, and delivering him over to *satan* : the man was then undone, and the clergy safe.

I shall shew how they soon banished the meek spirit of the Christian religion, and growing to as great variance with mercy as they were with reason, perverted religion into rage, and zeal into cruelty. They made the peaceable doctrine of Jesus a doctrine of blood, and excommunicated and damned by that name, by which alone men could be saved. It is true, they damned one another as much as they did the rest of the world ; for, agreeing in nothing but the great principle of interest, though they rode upon the necks of their people, yet they never could be at peace, nor ease, among themselves, so long as each individual was not in the highest place : and therefore, because every one of them could not be above all the rest, they were eternally quarrelling, and giving one another to the devil.

If one of them held any proposition, true or false, it was reason enough for another to deny it, and curse him into the bargain. At last, there was not one principle in their system but what was contested, and they agreed in nothing but their own power ; though, at the same time, they disputed what that was.

In this everlasting scuffle and civil war, they had so mangled truth, and muffled it up, that few could distinguish it from the false image : which they had made of it. And yet these men, who, by their constant discords and debates, confessed themselves in endless uncertainties, were the sure and infallible guides to others, who were obliged to believe their guesses and contradictions, on pain of hell-fire.

I shall shew what a shameful hand they have always had in bringing and keeping mankind under tyranny and bondage to such princes as would divide the spoil with them. In such case, it was a point of conscience, and a religious duty, for subjects to be miserable slaves ; and damnation but to strive to be happy. But if the prince happened to be a lover of mankind, and endeavoured to protect his people in their civil and sacred rights ; then were they the constant incendiaries of

every popular and wicked faction. They preached nothing but sedition and blood, till they had worked up their blind and stupid votaries to rebellions and assassinations. To such conduct is owing a great part of their power and wealth.

I think no one, who is the least conversant with ecclesiastical history, will deny that this was the condition of Christianity before the reformation. The chief intent of this work is to let all the world know it, that they may be upon their guard against the like mischiefs. It is certain, that the demands of the high clergy, upon the laity, are as great, if not greater, than they were at that time. As father Paul says of England, the horse is bridled and saddled, and the old rider is just getting upon his back.

It is time now to conclude this paper, by saying, that if my hearty endeavours shall any ways contribute to detect the impostures, and expose the wicked practises of those, who, under the prostituted name of sanctity, are foes to truth, to liberty, and virtue ; I shall think my time and pains well spent. But if not, I shall have the internal satisfaction of having attempted at least to attack vice and corruption, however dignified or distinguished ; and the worst which can be said of me, is,

Magnis tamen excidit auris.

G.

NUMBER 3.

Of the contempt of the Clergy.

RING the bells backward ! the temple, the temple is on fire ! The high-priests look aghast, and the people stare, and all cry out, the craft, the craft is in danger !

This I expected, and was prepared for, when I first engaged in the undertaking : touch a galled horse and he will wince, though 'tis in order to cure him. I know a gentleman, who found out a murderer, by looking stedfastly in his face : when any one is conscious of his own crimes or infirmities, he is jealous of every approach towards a discovery, and often makes one by it.

It is remarkable, that no order or society of men is so apprehensive of disrespect, or can so little bear the examination into their pretensions, as the greatest part of the ecclesiasticks. If you ridicule or laugh at the professions of law and physic, the lawyers and physicians will laugh with you. The same is true of soldiers, merchants, and the professors of almost all arts and sciences, who generally are the first to expose the knaves and fools amongst them.

If a lawyer, soldier, or merchant, deserve the pillory ; neither Westminster-hall, the army, or the East-India company, are in an uproar ; or complain that the law, trade, or the soldiery, are wounded through his sides ; nor endeavour to raise a mob in his behalf, or rebel in token of their unlimited submission to government. The fair sex de

and foment rebellions : let them not defy Heaven by swearing falsely : let them not promote servitude in the people, and barbarity in the prince : and let them not flatter wicked kings, and plague and disturb good ones.

Let them win respect and wear it ; but let them not earn infamy, and demand veneration. Let not those of them, who gratify brutish appetites, and live in all vileness, add want of shame to their want of grace, and bewail that they are contemned, while they are deserving it. If a man pretending to great gravity and regard, should dress himself up in a fool's coat, and a pair of horns, would not people laugh at him in spite of themselves ? and would not his resentment and rebukes add still to their mirth ? A clergyman who is drunk on Saturday, will but, with an ill grace, talk of his dignity and ambassadorship on Sunday. Ought we to own and reverence that man as our guide to Heaven, who is himself going a contrary road, and rioting in those vices which his whole duty is to restrain ?

The honour therefore of the good clergy is consulted and promoted by exposing the bad. A profane priest is the disgrace and bane of his own order, and they who stand by him, adopt his infamy, and defile themselves. If he neglect God, and disturb human society, how do the clergy suffer though he be whipped or hanged ? his punishment is their credit and security, because by it is lopped off from their body a gangrened limb, that incumbred and deformed the rest.

Atheists, who are not restrained by the fear of God, which is stronger than all the laws in the world, ought, in the opinion of politicians, as well as casuists, to be expelled from the society of men. And shall more mercy be shewn to those who are so hardened in impiety, that though they believe a God, yet dread not his vengeance, but swear by his great and terrible name to an avowed falshood ? or can the clergy suffer by the loss of such execrable company ?

An unfortunate Levite, some years since, had his head cleft by a butcher, who caught him in bed with his wife ; and neither the number of reverend auditors, who attended the trial, a due regard to the cloth, or an apprehension of the carnage it might produce, could hinder the judge from directing the jury to call the crime only man-slaughter. This so provoked the meek spirit, and patience, of a holy brother, then present, that he cried out in the court, here's a fine world ! if these things be suffered, there will be no living for us.

No chaste or sober clergyman could be terrified with such an example, or think the church in any danger by it. Does any virtuous member of the holy order suffer either in his person or character, if Biss divert his spectators in a pillory, or parson Paul his auditors upon a gallows ? none can share in their disgrace but those who sympathize in their crimes, or censure their punishment. How much more honest, as well as prudent, would it be to remove the guilt from themselves, by throwing it all upon the devoted head ; to put the evil thing out of the city ; and to imitate the sagacity of the horned herd, who always drive the blown deer from amongst them, where he seeks his refuge, though at the hazard of involving the whole tribe in his misfortune !

T. & G.

INDEPENDENT JOURNAL

NUMBER 1

Of the Exposition of the Scriptures.

To fear God, and keep his commandments, is the summary of the Testament; and to believe that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, the compendium of the new. Whoever can prove his obedience and faith, by these two plain duties, fulfils the law and the gospel.

It was most agreeable to the infinite goodness and tender mercies of God, to make every thing which he requires of us weak men, obvious and clear. The importance of the duty implies its certainty, which is to be found in phrases either doubtful or obscure. The scriptures are justly styled the revealed will of God; they are addressed to all mankind, and given to remain as a rule of faith and manners to the end of the world. It must therefore follow, that whatever is necessary to be known in them, is to be as easy and intelligible at one time as another, and to all men alike.

Where their meaning cannot be positively determined, a new inspiration will be necessary to reduce them to certainty; and if that be wanting, every thing else is but conjecture. Whoever therefore goes out to put a construction upon such passages in scripture, and engages us to believe his interpretation, does not demand submission to the word of God, but to his own authority and imagination.

What use is there of an unintelligible proposition? Or of a revelation which wants to be revealed? Almighty God will never require of us to see in the dark, till he has given us new eyes; nor to believe any article, or obey any precept, till we understand him, and know what he means. A rule which is not plain is no rule at all; nor will it make a law binding, or the transgression of it a sin, till we know what it is.

It is true, that human laws oblige all men to submit to the penalty annexed to the transgression, though many perhaps may never hear of it. But this is to prevent the constant plea of ignorance, which otherwise would be made by all offenders. The corruption and imbecility of human nature makes this procedure necessary. But it is far otherwise in the dispensation of Providence. The author of it sees our hearts, penetrates the most secret recesses of our souls, makes indulgent allowances for our weaknesses, and expects nothing from us but what he has given us the means and abilities of knowing and performing. He requires us not to make brick without straw. He judges by the intention not the action. We cannot offend him but voluntarily, much less offer him an affront, when we design respect and obedience.

The creator and preserver of mankind cannot take delight in puzzling his creatures with darkness and ambiguities, and in points too, where their souls are in danger. He is not a rigid master, who will reap where he did not sow. This would be a cruel mockery, unworthy of the Divine Being who has brought life and immortality to light.

Nothing is plainer than the law and the gospel. Whoever says the contrary, does no less than accuse the great and good God, and justify wicked and wilful men, whom he has left without excuse, by telling them clearly what he expects from them. What does God require of thee, O man, but to do justice, to love mercy, and to walk humbly ? said one of his prophets out of his mouth. I am sure there is no difficulty in understanding this.

The obscure passages in scripture could not be intended for our instruction. Infinite wisdom has hid them from our eyes, to be brought to light in his own time, and then to answer the ends of his providence, or perhaps to baffle our vain pride and curiosity. Who art thou O man, who wouldst be wiser than the Omniscient ; make those things necessary which he has not made so ; discover what he has thought fit to conceal ; and know his secrets whether he will or no ? This would be to mend the scripture ; to make it more useful than God has made it ; to help the Holy Ghost, and to teach the Almighty how to express himself.

How absurd would it be to send cook-maids and day-labourers to study Aristotle and Suarez ; to rake into the jargon of the schools ; to learn all languages, examine all systems ; and to discover of themselves all errors, interpolations and mistakes ; or to do what is much more ridiculous, that is, wholly throw themselves and their salvation, in most countries upon a confederacy of men, who have an interest to deceive and oppress them, and ever did so when they had an opportunity ; who have always been at variance with one another, and with themselves ; and have agreed in nothing but the misleading of those who trusted them ! And yet one of these must be the unhappy circumstance of the greatest part of mankind, if what I have said before be not true ; which we may be sure the Divine goodness cannot permit.

Nothing is more evident from history, than that most, if not all, the improvements and reformations of religion have been made, not only without, but in opposition to these men. There have been near a million of them kept in constant pay for the best part of seventeen hundred years, to teach the world by their precepts, and reform it by their example ; and yet I am persuaded they will not pretend that religion is plainer, the scriptures better understood, or that mankind are more wise or virtuous for all their instructions. So little have we been benefited by their labours and for all the money they have received ! I wish I could not say the world has gradually decreased in piety and virtue, as these its teachers have advanced in riches and power. It is owned by the best of themselves.

It is the farthest from my thoughts, by any thing I have before said, to undervalue their true office, much less to make it useless. I sincerely think it absolutely necessary to the peace and happiness of society. The Roman consuls had an officer attending their triumphal chariots, whose business it was to cry out *Memento mori*.

I would have these too, answer the same end of their institution ; to press the reading of the scriptures upon their hearers ; to shew its excellency and advantages ; to inculcate the plain precepts of faith and morality contained in it ; and to demonstrate the goodness of God to men, by proving that he has laid down to us, in plain words, every duty which he requires of us, either to himself, our neighbour or our-

selves. But let them not distract instead of instructing, and confound ignorant people with metaphysical subtilties, which the wisest cannot comprehend. Let them not strain ridiculous and selfish consequences from obscure parts of scripture, and make the Almighty mean what he never said. Let them give us God's will in God's words.

Another end of their office is to execute those duties of our most holy religion, which the word of God has left at large for every one to do, but which indeed are necessary to be performed by single persons in the several churches or societies of Christians ; such as reading the scriptures and publick prayers aloud to the congregation, and administering the sacraments : what by the gospel liberty is the right of every one (as shall be unanswerably made out hereafter) is by the consent of voluntary and national churches become the duty and business of particular persons, who are set aside and paid for that purpose.

In what I have before said, I have the concurrence of the best and wisest of our own clergy, who acknowledge and contend that we are not to take the Almighty's meaning at second hand, nor receive that for his will which we ourselves do not find to be so ; but that we are to enquire before we believe, and to be convinced before we assent ; every assertion or proposition, before it is examined, being alike to the understanding, as every colour is to the blind. They own that our judgment ought to be at no man's service, nor our minds controuled in religious matters, but by God alone ; for as no man's soul can be saved by proxy, so no man ought to exercise his faith by proxy. G.



NUMBER 5.

The unfitness of the Clergy to teach others.

As in my last paper, I hope, I have fully shewn that clergymen have no right to interpret the scriptures for other people : so I shall endeavour in this, to prove that they are, for the generality, the least qualified to do so, of any set or society of men, in their present state of learning and virtue. This I do with a sincere design to serve them, as well as the laity ; hoping that when they see from what source the neglect and contempt, which they so much complain of, proceed, they will join heartily in their own reformation, in answering the ends of their institution, and in being hereafter as useful to their country, as many of them have been formerly mischievous.

Use makes every posture familiar to the body, and every opinion to the mind. We are told that the Brahmans, in India, do, by long habit, so distort their limbs, that they grow in the situation which they are put in. Every day's experience proves that we assimilate with the company we keep, as well in our sentiments, as in the air and mien of our bodies. Not only different nations, but often sects, professions, and trades, are to be known by their phiz and behaviour.

A sailor, or a tailor, (to say nothing of their betters) may be found out, however they disguise themselves.

Nothing but keeping the best company can give a free and easy carriage; and an open and generous conversation alone can disengage our minds from the strong impressions of our early education. The habit of thinking freely, and of expressing freely those thoughts on all occasions, enables us to judge well of men and things. Our minds are polished by collision, and a liberal conversation not only starts all difficulties, but solves them, if they are to be solved.

Almighty God gives us faculties to use them; and it is ingratitude, as well as folly, to return the gift upon his hands. Truth can never suffer by an impartial examination, but on the contrary will receive strength and advantage from it. It is error and imposture alone, which dread a fair enquiry, as being conscious of their own weakness.

I think I may therefore safely affirm, that whatever body or society of men are most restrained by themselves or others, from reasoning freely on every subject, and especially on the most important of all, are the least qualified to be the guides and directors of mankind.

I will now examine how far this is the circumstance of the clergy in most countries. They are no sooner discharged from the nurse and the mother, but they are delivered over to spiritual pedagogues, who have seldom the capacity, and never the honesty and courage, to venture at a free thought themselves and must consequently be improper channels to convey any to their pupils.

From thence they are sent to the universities (very commonly upon charity) where they are hamstrung and manacled with early oaths and subscriptions, and obliged to swear to notions before they know what they are. Their business afterwards is not to find out what is truth, but to defend the received system, and to maintain those doctrines which are to maintain them. Not only their present revenues and subsistence, but all their expectations are annexed to certain opinions, established for the most part by Popes and Synods, in corrupt and ignorant ages; and even then often carried by faction and bribery, in concert with the designs and intrigues of statesmen; but become sanctified by time, and now to be received without enquiry.

No one can fairly examine what is truth, who has an interest on either side of the question. We are bribed by our inclinations, in spite of our best resolutions. Who can be heartily angry at an opinion, which will keep a coach and six, or strenuously endeavour to find out any heresy in it? besides, all men are fond of respect and homage, and when they are in possession, will esteem it but an unprofitable study to find out that they do not deserve them.

As clergymen so educated cannot, for the reasons aforesaid, be fair and impartial judges themselves of what is truth, so their authority can give but little weight to such doctrines as they may think fit to teach to others. The first question asked of a suspected witness in every court of judicature is, whether he gets or loses by the success of the cause? and, if either appears, he is constantly set aside, and not trusted with an oath.

It is demonstrable in reason, that every man's pretences ought to be tried by the same test and rule; and where the evidence of a proposition cannot be clearly shewn by one who has an interest to advance it,

be proved by miracle, all other persons have reason to suspect it of imposture: when what he offers will indisputably conduce to his own benefit, and I have only his word that it will conduce to mine, I cannot but believe that he is not doing my business, but his own.

The apostles, and some of the first Christians, did not so teach Christ. They not only convinced mankind of the truth of what they said by miracles; but made it apparent to all the world, that they sought no temporal benefit: on the contrary, they left their families, their possessions, and all the comforts of life, to wander about the earth, and preach a doctrine infinitely advantageous to the present, as well as eternal state of others; and expected no reward to themselves in this life, but beggary, stripes, and even death itself.

It is not to be wondered that, in universities abroad, no such disputes, or even such distant hints, are countenanced or permitted, which have the least tendency to oppose the pride or temporal greatness of the clergy; nor any speculations suffered to be vented there, which ever so little break in upon received opinions. It is not only a painful step to all hopes of preferment, to question the truth of any of their darling notions; but you are in danger of being expelled, and exposed to be discountenanced and contemned.

The philosophy and learning there taught, and encouraged, are exactly calculated and adapted to this state of darkness and ignorance: these are nothing but an unintelligible jargon of undefined words and empty sounds, which mean nothing, and yet can prove every thing. With this gibberish the pupils there are diverted from sound knowledge, by being put upon a wrong scent; and are hindered from attaining true wisdom, by believing that they have got it.

All attempts towards useful learning are neglected and discouraged; and nothing is found out to be true in philosophy, but is made false in religion; and the authors and discoverers are branded with heresy, if not atheism. Of this the examples are infinite.

Thus accoutred, and thus set out, our young ecclesiastick commended governors and director of mens consciences. He is impatient of the least contradiction, and is all in a flame at an opposition which has not been used to. As he never questioned the truth of any of his own notions himself, he grows outrageous at any one else who does, and immediately cries out aloud for fire and faggot.

To this it is owing that the difference between the controversial writings of gentlemen, and those of divines, is so very remarkable. The first are carried on for the most part with humanity, and always with good manners, even when the matter is most poignant and sarcastical. In the latter, at first sight, appears the odium theologorum; and rage, ill-breeding, and revenge breath through every part of them. proper disposition this to make converts, and govern the world!

This temper has (even in England) shewn itself visibly, in the treatment of a modern bishop,* whom neither his great penetration, his pious life, nor the pretended regard to his pastoral function, could

* Dr. BENJAMIN HOADLEY, then bishop of Bangor, and now bishop of Salis-
bury.

protect from ecclesiastical hatred and fury, for his having dared to engage in the interest of mankind.

As it is undeniably true, that what I have before described is the unhappy circumstance of the clergy, in most countries ; so no man, who has the least desire to promote useful knowledge, true virtue, and sound religion amongst mankind, but must endeavour to manumit them from this state of servitude and darkness, even though they should oppose it themselves. Birds and beasts used to lodges or dens, are afraid to go out of them ; and even men long shut up in dark dungeons, cannot for some time bear the light of the day. Galley-slaves not knowing what to do with liberty given them, have often, of their own accord, returned to their chains ; nay, God's own people themselves longed again for Egyptian flesh-pots, and Egyptian slavery, when they were fed with food from Heaven ; notwithstanding which, Moses would not gratify their brutish appetites, but made them happy in spite of themselves.

I would therefore have every clergyman enjoy the full liberty which every layman enjoys. We are not confined in our searches after truth ; and why should the clergy be confined, in whose hands it is more powerful and advantageous than in ours ? The granting of ecclesiastical freedom to churchmen is as equitable as that of civil freedom to laymen. I thank God, we possess a glorious portion of the latter ; and I heartily wish them an equal portion of the former.

T.

NUMBER 6.

Of Creeds and Confessions of Faith.

I have shewn in my fourth paper, the boldness and absurdity of the exposition of Holy Scripture, when the exposition is maintained and imposed for canonical truth. I shall here prosecute the same subject merely as it relates to creeds and confessions of faith.

In our disputes with the church of Rome, we contend that the Scripture alone is a sufficient rule of faith and practice ; and our divines have proved it unanswerably. But when our high-church priests argue with dissenters, and those whom they are pleased to christen hereticks, holy writ is not so highly complemented : It is then very subject to lead us into mistakes, and hard to be understood. It is true, 'tis infallible, and was given us from Heaven to *be a light unto our feet, and a lamp unto our paths* ; but still it is dark and insufficient without human aid and explication. For, though it be exceeding plain to us of the established church of England, and proves us to be in the right in every article, ceremony and habit whatsoever ; yet it is utterly hid from those who will not accept of our guidance, and submit to our authority. And therefore if they refuse to believe and obey our supplements and improvements of the Bible, and to accept of the

salvation which is to be had in our church, and the church of Rome, they shall have no salvation at all. It is fit and orthodox that men should perish for following their consciences, and for understanding the scripture without the leave of the ordinary.

Thus when they debate with the papists, they praise the scriptures, inveigh against the imposing of opinions, and speak in the stile of dissenters. But when they are pleased to rebuke nonconformists, they borrow the language of papists, urge the authority of our apostolick church, and her divine right to judge for others ; and deal hard language and worse usage to all that take the same privilege which they do. There is, however, this small difference between us conformists and the schismaticks : we have good pay for being orthodox, and the separatist pays dear for being in the wrong. If these are not two good reasons for delivering him over to Satan, I despair of finding better.

In consequence of this power in high churchmen to be the mouthmen of the Bible, which, if we take their word, cannot speak for itself, they claim a right to make creeds for others : and this is what I am now to examine.

I think it but justice to the goodness of God to affirm, that belief or disbelief can neither be a virtue or a crime in any one, who uses the best means in his power of being informed. If a proposition be evident, we cannot avoid believing it ; and where is the merit or piety of a necessary assent ? If it be not evident, we cannot help rejecting it, or doubting of it ; and where is the crime of not performing impossibilities, or not believing what does not appear to us to be true ? Are men who have good eyes, the more righteous for seeing ? Or do they offend in seeing too well ? Or do blind men sin, in not distinguishing colours ?

When we see clearly the connexion of a proposition, or know that we have God's word for it, our assent is inevitable. But if we neither comprehend it ourselves, nor see God's authority for it, and yet swallow it, this is credulity, and not divine faith, which can have nothing less than divine truth for its object. When we are sure that God Almighty speaks to us, we readily believe him who cannot lie, nor be mistaken, nor deceive us : But when men speak, though from God himself, our belief in them is but human confidence, if we have only their own authority that they had it from God : Their being bishops, their being learned, their meeting together in synods ; all this alters not the case : We can judge of their opinions no otherwise, than as of the opinions of men ; and of their decisions, but as of human decisions.

When the articles of any creed appear to be contained in scripture, whoever believes that, does in consequence believe them ; and then such creed is unnecessary : But when we cannot, or think we cannot, find them in scripture, and yet give equal credit to them, we depreciate and profane the divine authority itself, by accepting the words of man's invention as wiser and more significant than the words of God's own choosing.

We are sure that the scripture phrases were inspired by the Holy Ghost, and as sure that our own forms and injunctions are human, and framed by priests. It is therefore strange, that the former should be insufficient and unintelligible, and the latter infallible, and to be ex-

braced and obeyed on the pain of damnation; and that the priests must do what God Almighty has, without success, endeavoured to do.

Besides, as the imposition of human creeds is contrary to reason, so it is also to charity. They were generally made in a passion, not to edify, but to plague those for whom, or rather against whom they were intended. They were the engines of wrath and vengeance, nor could they serve any other purpose. Those who believed them already, did not want them; and those who disbelieved them, were not the better for them. But this was not the worst of it; for they who did not receive them against their conscience, were cursed; and they who did, deserved it. So that either the wrath of God on one hand, or the wrath and cruelty of the clergy on the other was unavoidable. If people said they believed, and did not, they mocked God and shipwrecked their souls; and if they did not believe and owned it, though they saved their souls, they provoked their reverend fathers, and were destroyed.

Whenever these dictators in faith had a mind to be mischievous, and to undo one who gave them signal offence, either by his good reputation, or good bishoprick, they began his ruin by their great care for his soul; and so invented a creed for him, which ruined him effectually, by giving him, as they said, to Satan, but, in truth, to beggary, stripes, or flames. He therefore who had any virtue or religion, was a certain sufferer by these systems of faith, which were contrived for that purpose. The man that had no conscience nor honesty, was not worthy of their anger; or, which is most likely, was on the orthodox side, or at least quickly became a convert to it, being, like themselves, able to swallow any thing.

Thus creeds, as they were the result of revenge, pride, or avarice, were the constant preludes and introductions to ignorance, cruelty and blood; and the wretched laity were craftily, as well as inhumanly, made the deluded and unnatural instruments of butchering one another, to prove the infallibility of the faith-makers; who, while they were wantonly shedding Christian blood, and dooming to damnation those who called upon the name of the true God, had the shameless assurance to miscall themselves the ambassadors of the meek Jesus.

And indeed, what better could be expected from men so chosen, so unqualified, and so interested, as the members of these general creed-making councils for the most part were? They were chosen from several parts by a majority of votes; and they who were most aspiring, factious, or crafty, carried it: they sprung from the meanest of the people: they were bred in cells: they popped into the world without experience or breeding: they knew little of mankind, and less of government, and had not the common qualifications of gentlemen: they were governed by passion, and led by expectation: and, either eager for preferment, or impatient of missing it, they were the perpetual flatterers, or disturbers of princes.

These were the men, this their character. When these reverend fathers were got together in a body, by the order of a prince or pope; who, having his necessity, or the ends of his ambition to serve, chose proper tools for those purposes; they were directed to form such creeds and systems of faith, as his present views or interests made requisite for mankind to believe.

In this new employment every member, we may be sure, was forward to shew his talents in starting new tenets, or in contradicting those already, and so to make himself considerable enough for that preferment which he was resolved to earn one way or another. And this being the great aim of them all, jealousies and hard words were carried to the most violent pitch. There was no end of their wrangling and reviling. Not content to abuse each other by word of mouth, they sometimes scolded in writing; and every reverend father drew up a bitter billingsgate petition against another reverend father. Sometimes, not satisfied with volleys of scurrility, unheard of in assemblies of gentlemen, they had recourse to club-law, and made good their inventions and distinctions with blows and blood. And if the truth could not be found out by scolding, contradiction, and battle, it was not found out at all.

Thus any emperor or pope might have what creed he pleased, provided he would be at the pains and price of it. And for the rest of mankind, they had this short choice, to comply, or be undone.

G.

NUMBER 7.

Of Uninterrupted Succession.

SINCE all the most idle and visionary pretences of the popish and popishly-affected clergy, have their ends, and their danger, and therefore should be narrowly watched, and vigorously opposed; I shall in this paper enquire into the validity of a principal claim of theirs, I mean that of uninterrupted succession; and endeavour to find whether there is any foundation to support this corner-stone of their authority, except in their own wild imaginations.

One might reasonably imagine, that a doctrine of so much importance to the temporal and eternal state of all mankind, should be expressly laid down, and fully explained in the holy scriptures, to prevent all possibility of mistake about it. But, instead of this, the word, as far as I remember, is not once mentioned there, nor any other word equivalent to it; so that we are under a necessity of recurring to the clergy themselves for information: and here too we are as much bewildered as before; for some of them boldly assert it, and others flatly deny it.

Besides, those who hate and damn one another, claim it equally to themselves, and deny it to all others. Those who are successors to the apostles in England, disown their brother successors beyond the Tweed and about the lake; and they their brother successors at Rome; and they theirs at Greece and Armenia, as well as every where else. Now all these, who so confidently assume the successourship to themselves alone, are as opposite to each other in sentiments and worship as light is to darkness. They cannot therefore all have it; and if only one has it, how shall we know who he is? No man's testimo-

ny ought to be taken in his own case ; and, if we take that of other people, there are twenty to one against them all.

If the clergy of the church of England as by law established, be, of all the reformed, supposed to enjoy this line of entail entire to themselves ; pray, how came they by it ? Not from the reformation, which began not till near fifteen centuries after the apostles were dead ; and Cranmer owned ordination then to be no more than a civil appointment to an ecclesiastical office. It is certain, at that time this utopian succession was not so much as thought of by any who embraced the protestant religion. At present, indeed, and for a good while past, the Jacobite high clergy contend for it with equal modesty and truth. But, in order to adopt it, they are forced to drop the reformation : for,

You must know, courteous reader, that this same succession is now deduced from Rome, and the pope has had the keeping of it ; who, by all that adhered to the reformation, was held to be antichrist, and the man of sin. He was often an atheist, often an adulterer, often a murderer, always an usurper ; and his church has constantly lived in gross idolatry, and subsisted by ignorance, frauds, rapine, cruelty, and all the blackest vices. It is certain, she was full of wickedness and abomination, and void of all goodness and virtue, but that of having kept the apostolick orders pure and undefiled for our modern high-churchmen.

However, I think they themselves seem to be now sensible, that it will be a difficult matter to make out, this way, their kindred to the apostles, without being nearer akin to popery. They are therefore forced to own the church of Rome to be a true church. Nor ought we to be surprized if, in succeeding to the orders of that church, they also succeed to most of her good qualities. I confess, amongst us laymen, it would look a little absurd, if any one should gravely assert, that, “ indeed *Lais* was a filthy strumpet, and no virtuous woman would converse with her ; but, for all that, she was a true virgin, and all chastity was derived from her ! ”

But such absurdities as these go for nothing amongst some sorts of ecclesiasticks. We will therefore, in the next place, enquire what it is which they would succeed to. The apostles had no ambition. jurisdiction, dignities, or revenues ; to which they could be successors. We read not in scripture one word of ecclesiastical princes, popes, patriarchs, primates, &c. On the contrary, our Saviour himself declares, that his kingdom is not of this world ; and when the young man in the gospel (St. Matth. ch. 19th) asked of him, *What he should do to obtain eternal life ?* He answered, that, besides keeping the commandments, he should sell all that he had, and give it to the poor. N. B. He did not bid him give a penny to the priests.

In the 20th chapter of the same gospel, our Saviour takes notice to his disciples, that the princes of this world exercise dominion over them ; but, says he, it shall not be so amongst you ; but whoever will be great amongst you, let him be your minister ; and whoever will be chief, let him be your servant. Nay, he says that even the son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. In the 23d chapter he condemns the Scribes and Pharisees, for loving the uppermost rooms, and the chief seats in the synagogue ; and their desiring

to be called of men, Rabbi ; and he forbids all this pride to his disciples as well as his other hearers ; and orders them not to call one another master ; for one, says he, is your master, even Christ, and he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. Nor do I find that, while he was upon earth, he laid claim to any power but to do the will of him that sent him. Indeed, after his resurrection, he tells his disciples that all power is given to him in Heaven and in earth ; and he bids them teach it to all nations, and baptize them in the name of the father, the son, and the holy ghost ; but he does not give them the least power, or dominion, of any kind whatsoever.

And it is plain that his disciples understood him so. St. Paul tells the Corinthians, in his second epistle to them, Chap. 1. that they had not dominion over faith, but were helpers of their joy. In the fourth chapter of the same epistle, he tells them, that *they preach not themselves, but Christ Jesus their Lord, and themselves THEIR servants for Jesus sake.* In the first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 3. he admonishes them not to glory in men, no not in himself, nor Apollos, nor Cephas ; and tells the people, that even the apostles themselves, and all things are theirs, and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's. In the ninth chapter he tells them, that though he is free from all men, yet he has made himself servant unto all, that he might gain the more. St. Peter also, in his first epistle, chap. 5. exhorts the elders to feed the flock of Christ, and to take the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind ; neither as being lords over God's heritage, but as being examples to the flock.

Now either these elders were clergymen, or they were not : if they were clergymen, their pretended successors may see upon what terms they are to be feeders, and overseers of the flock of Christ : but, if they were only laymen, then it is plain that no other qualifications were necessary to a spiritual shepherd, than a willing, disinterested, and humble mind ; and all subjection is, in the fifth verse, commanded to be reciprocal—*Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves to the elders : yea, all of you be subject to one another, and be clothed with humility ; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.*

For myself, I confess that I am not master enough of any language to find words more expressive, or which can more fully renounce all sorts of jurisdiction and dominion, than those in the passages which I have here quoted : and nothing more ridiculous, as well as impious, than to oppose them with equivocal, doubtful, and figurative expressions. If the popish priests could but find out one such clear text on their side, how would they exult upon it !

As I have made it fully appear, that the apostles understood our Saviour in this sense ; so it is evident, that the first Christians had not the least apprehension that the apostles claimed any power or authority to themselves. They were poor men, of mean and mechanical professions, who left fathers, mothers, children, families, trades, and renounced all the good things of this world, to wander about it, and preach Christ. Their disinterestedness and sufferings were powerful arguments of the truth of their doctrines : whereas, if they had told their hearers, in the modern high-church strain, that “ as soon as they became their converts, they became also their spiritual subjects ; that they themselves were ecclesiastical princes ; and that spiritual govern-

ment was as much more excellent than the civil, as Heaven was than earth, yea much more so ; that the episcopal honour, and sublime dignity, could not be equalled by the glory of kings, and the diadems of princes ; that kings and queens ought to bow down to the priests with their face towards the earth, and lick up the dust of their feet"—with whole volumes more of such blasphemous trash, as is vended by Dr. Hicks, Mr. Leslie, and indeed by almost all the high-church writers ; and yet not publickly disapproved, or censured by the convocation, or any body of the clergy, though they have shewn an outrageous enmity to all who have asserted the contrary principles. If the apostles had told them too, that they themselves had a right, not only to the tenth part of their estates, but of their labour, and that since they (their hearers) administered so many things to a king, who administers peace and war for bodily safety ; how ought they not to administer more liberally to him, who administers the priesthood towards God, and secures both body and soul by his prayers ?

I say, if any of this choice fustian had been broached to the world, at the first opening of the gospel, what progress could Christianity have made ? how could the apostles have been disinterested witnesses of the truth of the doctrines, which gave them such jurisdiction, dominion and riches ? and how justly would the princes and powers of the earth have punished such usurpations upon their civil and ecclesiastical authority ?

The silence alone of the enemies to Christianity, is a sufficient confutation of this wicked and black calumny, cast upon them by their pretended successours ; but which their bitterest opposers had more modesty than to charge them with, though they ransacked earth and hell for all other sorts of scandal.

T. & G.

NUMBER 8.

Of Uninterrupted Succession.—Part 2.

DR. TILLOTSON, in his sermon against transubstantiation, tells us, that " it might well seem strange if any man should write a book to prove that an egg is not an elephant, and that a musket bullet is not a pike." He might have added, that this was the hard circumstance the laity were reduced to in their disputes about religion with most sets of ecclesiasticks ; and what is still worse, when they had proved these propositions, they were never the better.

The greatest part of mankind have learned to judge of religious matters, by other faculties and senses than those which God Almighty has given them. The first thing they are taught is, that reason may be on one side of the question, and truth on the other ; which maxim being well established, there will be an end of all reasoning ever after ; and there can be no longer any criterion between truth and false-

And the priests, who, by education and custom, have only lost the passion of their superstition and fears, may impose upon them what crafty and advantageous doctrines they please.

By these means the Christian religion, most easy and intelligible in itself, and adapted to the meanest capacities, is become in most countries a metaphysical science, made up of useless subtilities, and insignificant distinctions; calculated to gratify the pride of corrupt clergymen, by making them admired and revered by the people, for their profound knowledge and deep learning; and consequently religion is wholly left to their care and conduct, as being infinitely above popular apprehensions. And to this the world is beholden for the depreciation of virtue and morality; and for all the domination, pomp, and riches of the Popish priesthood.

I, therefore, hope, that no one will condemn an undertaking intended to restore Christianity to its primitive innocence, and native simplicity; to oppose common sense against pompous nonsense, and learned absurdity; and to shew how, and in what meaning, the kingdom of heaven is said to be revealed to babes and sucklings, and hid from the learned and wise. That is to say, it is easily learned and known, by those who make use of their natural faculties, and uncorrupted reason, but will always be hid from such, who hunt after it in the schools of the philosophers, or in any ambitious and factious assemblies and synods of Popish ecclesiasticks. I shall therefore endeavour to keep this plain and easy subject clear of all vain philosophy, and metaphysical gibberish, with which the adversaries always attempt to entangle it; as knowing well, that if they can but make it unintelligible, their authority alone will decide every question in their own favour.

As I conceive I have fully shewn, in my last paper, that the apostles claimed no jurisdiction, authority, or coercive power of any kind whatsoever, over their hearers; but only obeyed the will of their master, in delivering a message from heaven, for the infinite benefit of mankind; and to prove their mission, brought their credentials, namely, the power of doing miracles, along with them: So I shall shew, that what power they had, (except that which was miraculous, and died with them;) or, to speak more properly, what right they had to perform the duties and offices of Christianity, did not descend to one Christian more than another; but that all were equally empowered to exercise alike the functions of their most holy religion.

When a command is given from God to men, to do and perform any action, it is not only the right of every one, but it becomes his duty, to execute it himself, when he is capable of doing it; unless the precept directs some other manner of performance: and whoever asserts that it does, is obliged to prove it. And he must not be surprised, if in a case of this great consequence, we shall expect plain and direct texts, describing the extent of the power demanded, and the persons to whom it is given. It will not do his business to pick up two or three scattered and disjointed sentences, and putting them upon the rack, torture them till they confess what they never meant, against the whole current of scripture. It must be laid down plainly and directly, and made obvious to the meanest capacities; not depending upon the criticisms of Rabbinical learning; not sublimated from Jewish and hea-

then traditions ; nor extorted from doubtful, equivocal, and unintelligible expressions. It is not consistent with the goodness of God, to suffer a power, upon which the being of Christianity, and the temporal and eternal happiness of all the world depends, to remain in obscurity and darkness ; and therefore we may be sure, that whatever of this kind does so, is the invention of ambitious and wicked men, and not the will of the great and good God.

It will be incumbent on them to shew one clear and direct text, where our Saviour confines the administration of the sacraments to any set of men whatsoever. The contrary of which is so evident, that there is not in scripture one instance where the sacrament of our Lord's supper was ever administered by any one, who, in our translation of the New Testament, is styled bishop or presbyter. And it is as plain, that the right of baptizing belonged to all Christians equally. Both which, I shall make out unanswerably hereafter, in separate papers. I shall also shew that the boasted power of excommunication, is nothing else but a liberty which every man has over his own actions, in conversing or mingling with what society he pleases ; or, at most, only a precept or exhortation, not to keep ill company, and to remove such, or separate from them.

But to proceed with my subject : If a chain of uninterrupted succession had been necessary, an uninterrupted course of talents, grace and abilities, superiour to those of all other lay Christians, had been necessary also, to have made the clergy resemble those whom they were to succeed in an employment which required the highest. But there is no such peculiar genius or virtue found amongst them. They are qualified by means evidently human for this divine calling. They are sent to schools and universities to learn to be successors to the apostles ; (I will not say of them, what Mr. Dodwell says of the Jewish priests, that they make use of wine, amongst other bodily helps, to obtain the prophetick spirit :) And all who have the same sense and opportunities, thrive at least as fast as those who are candidates for the priesthood : They might, if they pleased, apply their learning to the same uses. And as to grace, piety, and humanity, I think verily that the modesty of the clergy will not let them pretend to excel their lay neighbours in those endowments.

The apostles were inspired, had the gift of working miracles, could bestow the Holy Ghost, had the discernment of spirits : They were consequently proper judges of the fitness of men for the ministry, and could confer that fitness. Our modern divines are not inspired, cannot work miracles, nor give the Holy Ghost ; nor can many of them even find out their own spirit, so far are they from discerning that of other people.

The apostles were a set of extraordinary persons, appointed by the Son of God to convert all nations, and had extraordinary endowments given them for that end. Their pretended successors are a race of very ordinary men, possessed of no extraordinary abilities ; sent by no divine authority ; nor to convert any nation ; but only take up a trade to get a livelihood.

Christ's apostles were penmen of the Holy Ghost, and writ books of scripture : but, pray, what new gospel do our modern apostles give us ? (I wish none of them had ever confounded the old.) They are at best

but note makers and commentators ; in which characters laymen have succeeded as well, even by their own acknowledgment.

Minellius and Gronovius have written notes upon Virgil and Livy : pray, are they successors to Virgil and Livy, for that reason ? and are the stupid commentators successors to the great Roman orator, because they have slept over his works, and darkened them with illustrations ? or is every one who sails to America for gain, a successor to Christopher Columbus, who discovered and pointed out the way to the new world ?

The great business and commission of the apostles, was to convert mankind. Now, I would be glad to know how they can be succeeded in a thing, which could be done but once ; and in countries, where it is already done : I mean, the converting of a nation, suppose Greece, England, or any other. What must the Jews have thought of a set of hair-brained Israelites, who would have demanded of them vast respect and revenues, for succeeding Moses in redeeming them from captivity to Pharaoh, and for leading them every day of their lives out of the land of Egypt, seventeen hundred years after they had left it ? Or could any number of Jews succeed Nehemiah in bringing back the captive tribes from Persia, and Babylon ? Can any one succeed the duke of Marlborough, in fighting the battle of Hochtsted, and relieving the German empire ? I presume that every foot soldier is not a successor to Alexander the Great ; nor every serjeant of the guards descended in a military line from Julius Cæsar.

N. B. Having shewn that the apostles have left no successors, there is an end of the question, whether their no-succession is interrupted, or not ? But my respect to the high clergy obliging me to give them all advantages, I will, in some future paper, admit that such a succession had once a being ; and then will undeniably prove that it has been frequently, I may almost say constantly, interrupted and broken, under all those heads which they make necessary to the continuance of it.

T. & G.

NUMBER 9.

Of the Clearness of Scripture.

I SHALL in this paper endeavour to confirm what I have said in my last ; by shewing, that God Almighty, in revealing his will to mankind, has always taken effectual care that it could not be mistaken, and therefore made it so plain, as to need no farther explanation, in all things which are necessary for us to know.

When God would have his pleasure known to men, it is agreeable to his goodness to make it evident : when he would not, it is agreeable to his wisdom to make it impenetrable. Scripture was not given to make work for interpreters ; nor to teach men how to doubt, but how to live. The Holy Spirit has made undeniably clear and manifest, all those

precepts that enjoin faith and obedience, which are the great points of religion ; and weak men cannot correct him, and do it better themselves.

I think it is generally granted, that revelations are no more, and that prophecy hath ceased. The reason given for this, I take to be a very good one, namely, that God has already sufficiently discovered his mind to men, and made his meaning manifest. If it were otherwise, we should doubtless have his extraordinary presence still ; but as we have not, it is to be presumed that there is no occasion. He appeared himself whilst men were in darkness ; but now that he hath shewn them his marvellous light, he appears no more. His presence is supplied by his word ; which being addressed to all men equally, and not to one tribe of men to interpret it for the rest, it follows, that all men have in their power the means to understand it. Old revelation therefore does not want the assistance of new, nor has the Omnipotent any need of prolocutors.

While God is delivering his law to the world, he is plain even to exactness ; and his orders are full and circumstantial even about the minutest points. This is eminently proved by his manner of giving laws to the Jews. Every ceremony, every instrument and garment used in their worship, is precisely described and directed. The trumpets, the candlesticks, the lamps, the spoons, the snuffers, are all of his own appointment, both as to the materials and the use of them. He makes it impossible to mistake him. He calls the priests by their names, points out their persons, and shews them every branch of their office. He limits and governs their behaviour while they are about it ; and does not leave it to their wisdom to invent such postures and ceremonies, as they think fit to call decent and significant. They had not the privilege to chuse their own garments. Moses, who was the civil magistrate, had it in his charge to sanctify and consecrate their persons. Their business in the sacrifices is pointed out to them : They are to put their hands upon the head of the beast, and to receive its blood, and to make fires. They are not, as I remember, once made use of to speak God's mind to his people ; that is the duty and commission of the civil magistrate, and Moses performs it. They had not the least hand in the celebrating of the passover, the Jewish sacrament, to which ours of the Lord's supper hath, it is said, succeeded : and as little were they employed in that other of circumcision, the reputed ancestor of baptism. In short, their whole function was to be servants and operators in the house of sacrifice.

If Almighty God was thus punctual and particular in the rituals and outside of his worship, can we imagine that he was defective or obscure, in declaring the more weighty points of the law ? No—When our first parents broke the covenant, they did it wilfully, and could not pretend that they understood it not ; *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it*, was all the injunction that was laid upon them. And there was no need of a commentator here. The text might have been rendered more perplex ; but not more plain.

The covenant which he made with Abraham was not less clear. He was to be the God of Abraham and of his seed ; and every male of his race, and those that were bought with money, were to be circumcised. There were no more words to this contract ; and the patriarch and his

the shortest and plainest system of divinity, most intelligible of itself, and in no wise darkened with glosses.

The decalogue, or the law of the ten commandments, delivered by God himself from mount Sinai, with great glory and astonishing circumstances, was little else but the law of nature reduced into tables, and expressed in words of God's own choosing; and they were worthy of the omnipotent and infallible author; for they were so plain and indisputable, that not a single person of all the twelve tribes, so addicted on other occasions to contradiction and wrangling, so much as pretended not to understand them: Nor was there one man, much less a body of men, set apart to explain them.

When God spoke to the Jews by his prophets, the same method of clearness was observed. The admonitions given, and the judgments pronounced, were adapted to the capacity of every one concerned. The Jews, it is true, did not often believe them, at least not mind them; but it was never pleaded that they did not comprehend them. God inspired, the prophets spake, and all understood; but neither needs nor paraphrases were made, for they were not necessary. At last, indeed the priests and pharisees made void the word of God by their traditions, and very rigidly tithing mint and cummin, neglected the greater things of the law, and taught for doctrines the commandments of men. But we know what thanks and character they had for their pains from the Saviour of the world, and what a terrible doom he pronounced against them. Read the 23d chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, and see the description of these vile hypocrites, and then consider whether they be at this day without heirs and successors. Indeed it seems to me to be the only succession which has not been interrupted.

The gospel, when it came, as it was to excel all other laws, in its ends and usefulness, so what is the shortest and plainest institution in the world. It only added the duty of faith to that of good works, which was the great, if not the only, business of the moral law. To believe that Jesus Christ was the only son of God, was the great principle of the Christian religion. Nor was the practice of this belief attended with the least difficulty, since our Saviour proved his mission and Omnipotence, by miracles that were undeniable and convincing. For the truth of them he appealed to men's senses; there was neither mystery nor juggling in his actions, nor did they want any body to explain them.

All this is further confirmed by the conduct of the apostles. The constant drift and tenour of their lives and preaching, was to persuade mankind to believe in Jesus Christ. In order to which, they worked miracles, and gave the holy ghost. The precept was thus short, and the motives to comply with it, were thus irresistible. Hence it was, that sometimes thousands were convinced in a moment, without either commentaries, or creeds, or catechisms. And indeed who could avoid believing a proposition that proved itself.

The apostles, when they had converted one city, did not stay to establish a Hierarchy there only, and to tell the same thing over and over again to those that knew it already. No, — when they had planted the faith in one place, they travelled to another, and preached the gospel to the unconverted world; leaving those already converted.

to perform Christian worship their own way. If they believed in Christ, and lived soberly, the apostles desired no more. Those were the two things needful ; not were they more needful than clear.

In this plain manner did God Almighty always discover himself and his will, whenever he dispensed his laws to men. On the other hand, while he hid himself from the heathen world, did their priests ever discover him ? No,—they had deities without number ; they worshipped stocks and stones, trees, rivers, bulls, serpents, monkeys and garlick. Both their religion and their Gods were of the priests making, and therefore we may be sure they were hopeful ones. They created their deities after their own likeness ; angry, cruel, covetous and lustful. Their mysteries were full of horror, obscenity, craft and delusion. The will of their God was searched in the guts and ordure of dead beasts ; and a coop of chickens were his privy counsellors. His favour or displeasure depended upon their craws ; if they had puny stomachs, the God was in a fit of the spleen ; if ravenous, he was in a giving humour, and would grant you any thing, even to the cutting of the throats of a whole army, or burning of a city, or plundering a province : and when he was tired of his kindness to you, he would perhaps in a day or two, do all this for your enemy.

Upon the whole, when Almighty God reveals his will, he does it effectually ; but when he disguises it in dark and doubtful expressions, it is plain that the time of making himself further known to men, is not yet come, and it is in vain for them to pry into his secrets.

The all merciful being does never require of us, that which we cannot find he requires. It is not consistent with his wisdom and goodness, to make that necessary which he hath not made plain. He has, with the greatest perspicuity, described the candlesticks, tongs, and other tools of worship under the Jewish law ; and yet in the gospel has not said one word of some doctrines, which we are told are necessary to salvation. Altars and priests are divinely appointed in the old dispensation, but are neither directed nor described in the new ; and yet we know of what importance they are at present in the popish church and elsewhere. The priest's office is particularized and circumscribed, even to the killing of a goat, or a pair of pigeons ; and yet under the gospel it is not so much as hinted, that a priest shall administer either of the sacraments ; though, if we will take their own words for it, there can be no sacrament without them. In the levitical law, the sons of Levi are expressly appointed to be priests continually ; but it is not once said in the Christian law, that there must be an uninterrupted race of bishops, or popes, or priests, to the end of the world ; and that there can be no church where it is not ; though, if this had been needful, it must have been particularized. So essential a part of Christian religion, and so absolutely necessary to every man's salvation, could never have been wholly omitted, or so much as left in doubt.

As by the law of Moses, the priest's office and duty were minutely described, so their maintenance was ascertained : but by the law of Christ, there is not any priesthood at all appointed, (as I shall fully make out hereafter) and consequently no certain provision made for them. It is indeed said, that the labourer is worthy of his hire ; and I acknowledge it is fit that those who hire them should pay them : but

sure this text leaves every one at liberty to choose his own labourer, and to make as good a bargain as he can, or to do his own business himself. What pretence is there of a divine right to just a tenth part; and not only of our estates, but of our stock and industry too, which in some corn-lands comes to double the rent that the landlord receives.

The tribe of Levi amongst the Jews were the twelfth tribe of Israel, and, in the division of the lands, had a right to the twelfth share, without any regard had to their priestly office; and consequently were allowed but a very small proportion towards their hire, and much less than, I doubt, their pretended successors would be satisfied with. I would therefore, as a sincere friend to their order, recommend to their consideration, whether it would not be most adviseable, to quit their divine right, and be even content with the laws of the land. G.

NUMBER 10.

Of Ordination.

I take honesty and knowledge to be the essential talents required for the work of the ministry: the one is acquired by study, and the other depends upon the disposition of the heart, or the grace of God. He therefore who has the capacity to teach and edify, has a right to do both.

Those who are candidates for the priesthood, carry their qualifications along with them! and having passed examination, receive a power from the bishop, which he receives from the law, to put these qualifications in practice. But, if upon trial, they be found insufficient, they are, or ought to be rejected,

A physician does not receive from the college an ability to practice; but only a declaration that he already has it. Such a declaration are holy orders; they convey nothing; neither righteousness, nor learning, nor wisdom. They are only a diploma or privilege to exercise a certain calling, during good behaviour. Any further than this what signifies the hand of a bishop laid upon the head of a stripling, who seeks promotion or a livelihood? If that hand puts any thing into that head, I would ask what it is, and how does it appear? What alteration for the better is to be found in the person, or endowments, or spirit of the party ordained? How does it appear that he has any moral sufficiency which he had not before? or any spiritual gift except what he carries home in his pocket; and which was conferred by the bishop's secretary for a fee? Can there be any new ability or character without some marks of it? or is there an alteration without a change? It is an inconceivable mystery to me, that the same man should be another man! I have known many a man's pride swell, and his morals decay, after orders; but very seldom his manners or his capacity enriched by them. He who has the spirit, will do the works of the spirit; by their fruits ye shall know them. The

thing, were it true, is very capable of proof. Indeed, it could not be hid nor disputed. On the contrary, when neither the heart is mended nor the understanding enlightened, it is manifest that the Holy Ghost has nothing to do with either.

A learned and virtuous layman can instruct more effectually, and pray more devoutly and successfully, than an ignorant and profane priest; and is consequently a more proper and sure guide to others. To say that he has no call, is no more than to say that he has not entered his name: besides, it is false; for I will lay it down as a proposition which I will abide by, that he who has a power to do good, has a call to do good; and the promoting of virtue, and securing of souls, is doing the greatest good of all. St. James tells us, that the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; but he does not say that he must be in orders, or that he must perform the same in a consecrated place; though the convocation, in the latter part of the Queen's reign, thought fit to differ with the apostle in this point.

Apollos, without any call at all, but from his own abilities, being an eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, and instructed in the way of the Lord, and fervent in the spirit, spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, and boldly in the synagogue. It is plain that he was not ordained, unless it was by the tent-maker and his wife, Aquilla and Priscilla; and that he had not the Holy Ghost, is also plain, for that he knew only the baptism of John; and so they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly. (Acts xviii. v. 24, &c.)

I doubt the Holy Ghost is too often made free with in Popish countries, upon the occasion of young mens taking orders. I believe it will be found that their motives are much more temporal. It is considered as a secular employment, as much as any other; and the labour of a clergyman is as evidently bought and sold, as that of an attorney or any tradesman. Besides, the way to this calling is easy and obvious: Where is the difficulty of learning a little Greek, or chopping a little logick, and of getting by heart a few questions in school-divinity? Nay, there are many ordained there, even without any of these momentous accomplishments.

There are some who take the orders of clergymen and yet never exercise the functions of clergymen, either through idleness or weakness. Does the Holy Ghost call men to the work of the ministry, not to do the work of the ministry? or does he call men to an office without giving them gifts and grace to perform it? It was not so in the apostles days, when God inspired all whom he sent; and where the divine commission or call was given, a door of utterance was also given. But there were then no sine-cures, no great revenues; no great doctors, nor small curates.

It is evident, that neither the church of Rome in general, nor any of its bishops in particular, believe a word of this pretended call of the holy ghost, in the business of taking orders. For, by the canons, the person demanding ordination, is to be examined as to his capacity for the ministry, and must produce a certificate as to the innocence and morality of his life; both which were unnecessary, if there was any proof or assurance of his call from God. And the questions asked him upon that occasion, are such as demand no more than ordinary human

aid to answer them. Nor is it at all expected of him that the goodness of his life should exceed that of other laymen ; if it be as good it is well.

Whenever the Holy Ghost was given, it was given upon some extraordinary occasion, for the doing of some extraordinary action : as it was to the apostles, for converting the heathen world. They shewed the power which they had, by the wonders which they did : and gave effectual evidences that they were divinely assisted. But some modern priests, who have no extraordinary work to do, assert, notwithstanding, that they have an extraordinary call from the spirit ; which would also infer his extraordinary assistance. But they say it without shewing it, and pretend to it, without proving it. It is a happiness that we are not obliged to take their word ; for though faith itself be the evidence of things not seen, yet still it is the evidence ; that is proof must precede belief.

When the popish clergy are charged with frailties, vices and immoralities, they then confess the truth, and are pleased to become flesh and blood as well as other men, and subject to the like infirmities and passions ; if they said greater, we could readily believe them. But when a point of gain or dominion is to be contended for, they grow all of a sudden more than men ; they are then the Lord's embassadors, successors to the apostles, a sacred society ; and the Lord knows how many more fine things. Now this management is very unlucky for them and full of palpable contradiction ; for if they had a greater share of God's grace and spirit than others, it would be especially evident in the superiour piety of their lives, since holiness is shewn in practice ; whereas the spirit of this world manifests itself in the love of power and wealth ; and hence those who pursue them are called worldly-minded, in opposition to God's elect, who are the spiritually-minded. I need not recommend it to such clergy, which to choose, carnal minds with riches and authority, or heavenly-mindedness without them. It is certain the apostles were as pious as poor.

If by the call of the Holy Ghost, on this occasion be meant no more than a serious and devout bent of the mind to administer in the publick worship of God, as some reverend divines, lovers of truth, do, I think, confess ; then is the claim of a divine mission and successive right utterly at an end : and the taking of orders is no more than the taking a license to perform a religious office, for which every religious intelligent man is already qualified.

And indeed such a man is, without the consent of any bishop, entitled to be a pastor, in the scripture sense of the word, though not to receive the legal wages of a pastor. He may preach and pray and deliver the sacrament, when temporal laws do not restrain him ; but cannot take tithes, which are annexed to certain conditions and opinions established by the state. As every state has its own religion, so almost every religion is directed and modelled by some state ; and therefore they who are orthodox conformists in one, are often schismatical dissenters in another. But such is the singular modesty and submission of the clergy, that they, in most countries, humbly acquiesce in the established faith ; and not only meekly accept of all the ecclesiastical power and revenues to themselves, but gratefully condescend to persecute all those consciences that are not as complaisant and supple as their own. And indeed, it is but generous in them to be zealous for

those notions and ceremonies, which bring them reverence and hire, but methinks it is a little unreasonable to expect that others should, without their motives, adopt their zeal.

P. S. Having in my last paper asserted, that there is no particular priesthood at all directed by the New Testament; I am told, that it is from thence surmised by some, through malice, and by others, through mistake, that I do by this insinuate, that there is therefore no occasion for any church ministry whatsoever, notwithstanding my former declarations upon this head. I particularly say in my third paper, speaking of the clergy;

“ Their office is evidently adapted to promote the welfare of human nature, and to propagate its peace and prosperity in this world, as well as its eternal felicity in the next; so that it is the interest of all men to honour it: and none but a madman will condemn and ridicule what has a manifest tendency to the security and happiness of all mankind.”

I also say in my fourth paper, that “ I sincerely think their office to be absolutely necessary to the peace and happiness of society.” I could likewise refer to other passages. But to give full satisfaction once for all, to such as will be satisfied, I declare that I do only contend for the right of every national and voluntary society to appoint their own pastors, and to judge of their doctrines and behaviour: Further than this I have no aim. Nor do I desire to lessen the respect due to the clergy from their merit and usefulness; or the dignities, privileges, and revenues which they derive from the law, or from the good will and contributions of the people. And I intend very soon to defend the church of England upon the principles and authority of the scripture and the law; as well as the toleration granted to dissenters by the same law, and the same scripture, G.

NUMBER 11.

The advantageous situation of the clergy, strangely inconsistent with their common cry of danger.

VIRTUE and innocence were created naked and undisguised; nor did our first parents cover themselves till they had offended. Truth can never sin, and therefore need not, and ought not, ever to appear in masquerade: she is most amiable when most uncovered, and appears truly majestick, and in greatest lustre, when disrobed of all gaudy and affected ornaments: her natural features want no varnish or colouring, nor has she any need of dressers and tire-women.

Knavery and deformity alone want daubing and disguise. Actors do not care that any one should look into the tiring room, nor jugglers or sharpers into their hands or boxes; whereas honesty and sincerity appear always barefaced, and shew themselves most in open day; they scorn all indirect advantages, and borrowed helps, but trust alone to their own native beauty and intrinsick strength: The lion is never known to use cunning.

I confess, that I am not master enough of my temper to avoid laughter, and indignation, by turns, at the noisy clamours of the high clergy against the freedom of the age, and the liberty of the press; as if virtue was inconsistent with good sense, or truth could suffer by knowledge, or religion by a free and thorough examination. What figure would a grave lawyer make in Westminster-hall, if, after he had been tiring his auditors for two hours together, he should desire the judges not to hear the counsel of the other side, lest they should perplex the cause, and mislead the court?

Every stander-by would take it for granted, that he was conscious of the weakness of his client's cause, and that it could no otherwise be defended, than by being not understood. This is, in point, the case of those, who demand of all mankind to be heard by the clock, and will yet hear no body; who talk and rail by wholesale, whilst they cannot bear a single jest, or ludicrous expression; and who write volumes by the yard themselves, and are in an uproar, and outrageous, at a single half-sheet of other peoples.

How absurd would it appear for an army of an hundred thousand men, entrenched up to the ears, to call aloud for the assistance of the constable and watch, to defend their camp against the assaults and storms of highwaymen and house-breakers! Just such a request do the popish clergy abroad make, when they cry out, fire, fire! help, help! when they demand the assistance of the secular power; and insist, that no sermons be preached, books printed, or harangues made, but their own. They have already more advantages than truth can desire, and indeed enough to offend her modesty, and to make her ashamed and blush; they are too well armed for a fair adversary, and yet are always complaining of the shortness of their weapons; and declaring themselves overcome by calling out for more help.

Besides the piety and example of their lives, they are vastly numerous, and in possession of great and various dignities, of immense revenues and dependencies; are all bred up to letters; have the prejudices of the people, the sole education of youth, the fears as well as the favours of the fair sex on their side; and have the weekly opportunity of haranguing to the people upon their own usefulness and importance: and they tell us too, that they have a sole right to the scripture prophecy, *That the gates of hell shall not prevail against them.*

Crowned heads always have thought it their interest to keep measures with them; ministers of state are not able to trick successfully, and play the knave, without their leave and assistance: they take advantage, and make their market of all factions and disturbances in states, and apply them to their own benefit: knaves shelter themselves under their protection; hypocrites court and seem to admire them, and biggots and enthusiasts adore them. Every event of life contributes to their interests: they Christen; they educate; they marry; they church; they bury; they persuade; they frighten; they govern; and scarce any thing is done without them. Notwithstanding all this, they roar aloud, that they cannot keep their ground, but that contempt and infidelity pour in upon them like an inundation.

It is very remarkable, that the first Christians were not only destitute of all the before mentioned advantages, but their enemies enjoyed them. They themselves were persecuted and contemned, buffeted,

ridiculed and calumniated, constantly in books and libels, published by the greatest philosophers and wits of the heathen world. Yet Christianity every day spread far and wide, and made a wonderful progress ; insomuch, that in an age or two, superstition and idolatry were driven from a great part of the earth.

A speculation upon this head, and an enquiry into the causes of so prodigious a change, would be worthy the endeavours of the brightest wits and geniuses of our age and country, who undoubtedly must be found amongst our own genuine clergy. I have long wished to see a dissertation upon this great and useful subject ; and with the greatest humility propose to the consideration of the lower house of convocation at their next (so much desired) meeting, to give the world their thoughts upon it, in a second representation of the causes of vice and infidelity. In hopes to encourage them in so public an undertaking, I intend before that happy day, to give them my poor assistance, and in some measure to alleviate their labours, by endeavouring to prove that no part of this misfortune ought to be laid at the door of the laity.

Indeed, it would be unbecoming the respect and reverence, which I have always professed, and hope shall always pay to these reverend gentlemen, even to hint at any thing so improbable as the contrary conjecture . for since human nature is always the same, who can entertain so indecent a thought of their designs, or have such a contempt of their performances, as to imagine that mankind can grow worse under the light of the gospel ; in defiance of their pious lives and examples ; of the numerous forms of publick and private prayer ; of their constant sermons, and godly exhortations ; of so many creeds, catechisms, systems, commentaries, and whole cart loads of other ghostly geer, which the world is every day blessed with from the laborious endeavours of above a million of ecclesiasticks, or more ; who have always, and do still, cost the people more than their whole civil and military expense put together ? since therefore, we may be sure that this great change and degeneracy cannot be owing to any remaining defect amongst the laity, it may well be expected from persons of their penetration and perspicuity, to let us into the true causes of so surprizing a phenomenon.

In the mean time, (though with all the due submission of an humble votary) I shall for once presume to advise them, not to level so many batteries against good sense and human reason, which are impreguably fortified and secure against the fiercest assaults. A great philosopher tells us, when reason is against a man, a man will be against reason. I therefore much fear if these my friends, and patrons should continue to hold forth and exert their eloquence against private judgment, freedom of enquiry, and a daily and diligent search after a religious knowledge of the holy scriptures, that the world may mistake their endeavours, and imagine that all these good things make against them ; and yet unfortunately they are in such repute, that there are little hopes of depreciating or putting them out of countenance.

Besides, I humbly conceive it to be impolitick upon other accounts too. It appears to me to be very indiscreet in persons militant, to endeavour to put an end to a war, which for the most part puts an end to themselves and their own pay. A jovial country parson once in a merry mood, passing by a waggon which was overturned, told the

earter that he had killed the devil ; to which the profane wretch replied, that he was glad of it with all his heart, because then, quoth Ralph, I have spoiled your trade. A word to the wise is sufficient.

Methinks also, it should 'be doing too much credit to his satanick majesty, to suppose him more than a match for a million of consecrated persons, with all their hierarchical powers, and as they say, divine assistances about them. T.

NUMBER 12.

The enmity of the high clergy to the reformation, and their arts to defeat the end of it.

MACHIAVEL advises any one, who would change the constitution of a state, to keep as much as possible to the old forms ; for then the people seeing the same officers, the same formalities, courts of justice, and other outward appearances, are insensible of the alteration, and believe themselves in possession of their old government.

Thus, Cæsar, when he seized the Roman liberties, caused himself to be chosen dictator, (which was an ancient office) continued the senate, the consuls, the tribunes, the censors, and all other powers of the commonwealth ; and yet changed Rome from the most free, to the most tyrannical government in the world.

This policy is yet more necessary to be observed in altering the religion of a country ; for very few persons, of any sect or party in faith, are conversant with the speculations or distinguishing tenets of their own church, or so much as know what they are.

Whilst they see the same broad-brimmed hats, band, cassocks, and long gowns ; and hear the same psalms sung in the same tone, and in the same fashioned buildings ; they think that they have the same religion, and will be angry with any one who shall tell them the contrary.

But if the ceremonies or other forms of religious worship are to be altered too, the change must be made insensibly, and by degrees, that the difference may be unobserved, or thought of no consequence ; and all advantages must be taken of revolutions in government, of publick calamities, and of factions, when they beat high, and are ready to fall into any measures to oppose and mortify each other.

The priesthood in all ages have made these arts, and a thousand others, contribute to their greatness ; the high-church jacobite clergy of England have put them all in practice to regain every thing which they lost at the reformation ; and if they could but have prevailed upon their flocks to have followed them, they had long ago sold them again in the Roman market : but since we of the laity are so refractory, and hang backward, they now seem resolved to gallop away by themselves, and leave us to come our own pace after ; insomuch that a clergyman of the church of England, as by law established. is, at present, be-

come, I am far from saying an uncommon, I am sure I may say, a most agreeable sight, and many of his brethren treat him as a monster.

It must be evident to any one, who has read our ecclesiastical story, that the reformation in England was carried on, not only without, but against the consent of the whole body of the clergy, (very few excepted) who always opposed every step towards their own amendment: it was, indeed, every where, properly speaking, an effort, or insurrection of the laity, against the pride and oppression of the priests, who had cheated them of their estates, imposed upon their consciences, debauched their wives, and were ever insulting their persons.

The poor injured people had long felt the malady, but were so intimidated by their own superstition, and the over-grown power of their haughty masters, that they durst not think of a remedy, till a bold and disobliged friar or two dissolved the enchantment; and then the whole Christian world seemed to rise at once against this fairy and fantastical empire.

But people long used to servitude, knowing not what freedom is, or how to preserve it when thrown into their laps, have always recourse to some leaders, of whose honesty and greater wisdom they have conceived an opinion: and these for the most part abuse such confidence, to advance their own views of wealth and power.

So it happened in this case; and consequently the reformation went partially on, according to the direction under which it fell. Where priests were at the head of it, they attempted only to make it a reformation of sounds and distinctions: they took no offence at the riches and grandeur of the clergy, (which was the source of all other evils) but were angry that they had not their share of them; and so looked upon the revolt only as a means to aggrandize themselves: they condemned not the tyranny, but the tyrants; and attempted to usurp that power in their own persons, which they loudly exclaimed against in the Romanish priesthood: most sets of them wonderfully well agreed, that there was a divine right in the clergy to dictate to the laity in religious matters; but every sect claimed that power to themselves, independent of all others.

They could not agree about sharing the prey, but each would have had the whole; which had this good effect, however, that they were all obliged to abate much of their pretensions, in order to engage customers; and, I thank God, they have not yet been able to raise the price again to the old market; though, to do them justice, they are no ways answerable to their successors, for having let slip any opportunity to that purpose.

But whilst they were thus carrying on their project for dominion, they found it necessary to throw out a barrel to the whale, and keep the peoples minds busied, and their passions afloat, with metaphysical subtilties and distinctions, of no use to true religion and morality, though very conducive to their own ambitious and tyrannical designs.

I would gladly know from these reverend venders of trifles, whether it would have been worthy the thousandth part of the combustion which has been made, or the blood which has been spilt, only to have settled a few speculations, if they could have been settled? Pray where is the essential difference between transubstantiation, consubstantiation, and the real presence? what the consequence, whether a child be

baptized by one sort of priests, or by another? or of what use to mankind are the abstruse questions about predestination, free-will, or free-grace? what is the difference, as to the duties or ordinances of Christianity, if they be administered under the direction of a single person, a bench of bishops, or a lower house of convocation, or none of them, all, so they be piously administered? or whether the chimerical line of succession be broken, or ever had a being?

Since 'tis agreed amongst all our present sects of Christians, that the Saviour of the world is the Son of God, descended from Heaven to teach virtue and goodness to men, and to die for our redemption; how are we concerned in the scholastic notions of the trinity? will the scripture be more regarded, or the precepts of it be better observed, if the Three Persons are believed to be three divine distinct spirits and minds, who are so many real subsisting persons? whether the Son and Holy Ghost are Omnipotent of themselves, or are subordinate and dependent on the Father? or if they are independent, whether their union consist in a mutual consciousness of one another's thoughts and designs, or in any thing else? whether they are three attributes of God, viz. goodness, wisdom and power? or three internal acts, viz. creation, redemption and sanctification? or two internal acts of the one subsisting person of the Father; that is to say, the Father understanding and willing himself and his own perfections? or three internal relations, namely, the divine substance and godhead considered as unbegotten, begotten and proceeding? or three names of God ascribed to him in holy scripture, as he is father of all things, as he did inhabit in an extraordinary manner in the man Jesus Christ, and as he effected every thing by his spirit, or his energy and power? or lastly, whether the three persons are only three beings, but what sort of beings we neither know, nor ought to pretend to know; which I take to be the trinity of the mob, as well as of some other wiser heads.

As far as I can remember, these are the important questions which have set mankind together by the ears, for so many ages; and it seems are yet thought of consequence enough to create new feuds, and mortal dudgeon amongst all our sets of ecclesiasticks. But why must we of the laity quarrel about them too? What have beaux and belles, old women, cobblers and milk-maids to do with homousios, consubstantiality, personality, hypostatical union, infinite satisfaction, &c. none of which hard words, or any like them, are to be found in scripture; and therefore, I think, we may even return to Rome, that being the place from whence they came, and be contented to be good Christians without them.

We ought to shew our faith and obedience to God, by a cheerful submission to his commands, and not affect a vain curiosity of prying into his secrets; pretend to philosophize upon his abstracted nature and essence; and, with our limited and corrupt understandings, assume to comprehend infinite wisdom and power, and define the modus of its existence and operations. Almighty God would not make himself farther known even to Moses, nor suffer himself to be otherwise described to the children of Israel, (though to get them out of the land of bondage) than by the comprehensive words, *I am that I am*; which methinks might baffle our officious impertinence, and put us in mind of the danger of peeping into the ark.

The above disputes make us neither wiser nor better. Men are not intended for speculation; exceeding few are capable of it. The faculties of our minds, as well as the frame of our bodies, are adapted to labour, and to supply the exigencies of our nature. We are formed for society and mutual help, and the goodness of God has implanted in us qualities suited to these ends; he has, besides, given us precepts for our assistance, and annexed infinite rewards to the observance of them. We know how to be good parents, good children, good neighbours, and good subjects; but how small a part of mankind understand, or are capable of understanding metaphysical questions! When they use the terms, it is plain that they have no ideas annexed to them, but fight at blind-man's buff, and quarrel about what none of them understand. It is evident therefore that the All-wise Providence could not intend to perplex and confound weak minds with such subtilties, for the knowledge of which he has not given them suitable qualifications.

T.

NUMBER 13.

The Church proved a creature of the civil power, by acts of parliament, and the oaths of the Clergy.

I HAVE observed, in my last paper, that many of the protestant priests endeavoured to divert the growing spirit in the Christian world for reformation, to metaphysical and useless speculations, of no benefit to the present or eternal happiness of mankind, whilst they were seating themselves at leisure in the chairs of their predecessors.

But far otherwise was it, where it fell under the direction of laymen; who considered it as an opportunity put by Heaven into their hands, to free themselves from the usurpations, and unjust denomination of the priesthood. They made no scruple (notwithstanding the loud cry of sacrilege) to seize and apply to publick uses, a great part of those riches, which the clergy had extorted from old women, and superstitious and enchanted bigots; the compositions for murders, for publick and private robberies; the plunder of dying and despairing sinners; and the supports of their own idleness, pride, ignorance and debauchery.

A bold and honest physician (whose name was Erastus) at this time started up, and told the world, that all these squabbles of the clergy about their own power, were disputes *de lana caprina*, (concerning a non-eternity) and that none of them had any right to what they almost all claimed: that the quarrel amongst them was only which of them should oppress the laity, who were independent of them all; for that their ministers were their servants, creatures of their own making, and not of God Almighty's. He shewed them from reason and scripture, that every state had the same authority of modelling their ecclesi-

astical as civil government ; that the gospel gave no pre-eminence, or authority to Christians over one another, but every man alike (who had suitable abilities) was qualified to execute all the duties and offices of their most holy religion ; and that it was only a matter of prudence and convenience to appoint particular persons to officiate for the rest, with proper rewards and encouragements ; which persons would be entitled to no more power than they themselves gave them.

This doctrine, as little as it pleased the clergy, yet prevailed so far with the laity, that most protestant states modelled their ecclesiastical polity according to their own inclinations or interests ; and particularly, in England, the whole reformation was built upon this principle, which ever till lately was esteemed the great characteristic of the Church of England ; and therefore 'tis the last degree of priestly insolence for a body of men to call themselves the only true churchmen, at the same time that they deny, and every where exclaim against, the fundamental and essential article which distinguishes it from most other churches, and particularly from presbytery ; for as to the rest of the articles, the Calvinists are more orthodox than the churchmen themselves.

At the very beginning of the reformation, the clergy here in England, conscious of their own enormities, and the just vengeance which hung over their heads, were contented to disgorge their ill-gotten, and as ill-used power ; and, in full convocation, threw themselves upon the king's mercy, acknowledging his supremacy in the fullest and most significant words ; and promised in *verbo sacerdotii*, that for the future they would never presume to attempt, alledge, claim, or put in use, enact, or promulgate any canons, constitutions, or ordinances, without the king's most royal license and assent had thereunto ; and humbly besought his majesty to appoint thirty-two persons, half clergy and half laity, to examine the canons and constitutions in being, and to abrogate and confirm them, as they should think good.

This petition was charged into an act of parliament by the 25th of Hen. the viiith, Chap. 19. But it is there declared, that the crown and convocation together, shall not put in execution any canons, constitutions, or ordinances, which shall be contrariant or repugnant to the king's prerogative, or the laws of the kingdom : the same statute also gives an appeal from the supreme ecclesiastical court, to the king's commission.

In the same session of parliament, the manner of proceeding upon the *Conge d'Elire* is directed, *viz.** A licence from the crown is to be sent to the chapter to choose or elect an archbishop or bishop, and a letter missive with it, to nominate the person whom they are to choose ; which if they do not obey, nor signify the same, according to the tenor of the act, within twenty days, they are subjected to a *præmunire* ; and if the election be not made within twelve days, the king may nominate a bishop by letters patents without any election at all, as is now done in Ireland, and formerly was so in Scotland, where their bishops were *durante bene placito*.

The next year the parliament† reciting, that the king justly and rightly is, and ought to be supreme head of the church of England, enact the same, and that he shall have full power to visit, redress, reform,

* 25 Hen. viii. Cap. 20.

† 26 Hen. viii. Chap. 1.

correct, and restrain all errors, heresies, abuses, offences, contempts, and enormities, whatsoever they be, which by any manner of spiritual authority or jurisdiction, ought or may be reformed, redressed, &c.

Afterwards, in the 37th year of the same reign, the parliament, reciting, that the bishop of Rome and his adherents, minding utterly to abolish, obscure, and delete the power given by God to the princes of the earth, whereby they might get and gather to themselves the rule and government of the world, had decreed, that no layman might exercise ecclesiastical jurisdiction, lest their false and usurped power which they pretended to have in Christ's church might decay, wax vile, and be of no reputation, (which power they affirm to be contrary to the word of God, and to his majesty's most high prerogative) and reciting also, that archbishops, bishops, archdeacons, and other ecclesiastical persons, have no manner of jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by from, and under the king's majesty : enact, that laymen, qualified as the law appoints, may exercise all parts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction, and all censures and coercions appertaining, or in any wise belonging thereunto.

The 2d and 3d of Edward the sixth, Cap. 1. enacts the common prayer-book, (which was before compiled and drawn up by the king's authority) and makes it a law.

The 3d and 4th of Edward the sixth, Cap. 12. appoints such form and manner of making and consecrating archbishops, bishops, priests, and deacons, and other ministers of the church, as by six prelates, and six other men of this realm, by the king to be appointed and assigned, or by the greater number of them, shall be devised, &c. and none other. These two acts were confirmed with some alterations, in the 5th, and 6th year of this reign.

The 1st of queen Elizabeth, Cap. 1. establishes and enacts, that all jurisdictions, privileges, superiorities, and pre-eminences, spiritual and ecclesiastical, at any time lawfully used, or exercised, for the visitation of the ecclesiastical state or persons, and for the reformation, order, and correction of the same, and of all manner of errors, heresies, schisms, abuses, contempts, offences, and enormities, shall be annexed to the imperial crown of this realm ; and gives power and authority to it to appoint any persons, being natural-born subjects, to exercise all sorts of ecclesiastical jurisdiction ; and declares at the same time what and what only, shall be deemed heresy.

The oath of supremacy (which is an assent to these laws, and obliges those who take it, to assist and defend them) is appointed in this act ; which oath all ecclesiastical persons, as well as any others, who shall be promoted and preferred to any degree or order in the University, are to take under severe penalties.

The 8th of Queen Elizabeth, reciting, that the queen had in her order and disposition, all jurisdiction, power and authority, ecclesiastical as well as civil ; and had caused divers archbishops and bishops to be duly elected, and consecrated ; does confirm all the said elections and consecrations ; as also the common prayer-book, and the orders and forms for the making of priests, deacons and ministers, which were added to it in the fifth and sixth years of Edward the sixth.

All which before mentioned acts are now in being, in full force, and sworn to by all the clergy, who are subjected to a præmunire if they contradict them.

- Thus our parliaments, at or just after the reformation, whilst the memory of sacerdotal oppressions continued in their minds, were resolved to pare their claws, curb their insolence, and not leave it in power to corrupt religion any more; and therefore put it under the care of the civil magistrate, who could seldom have any interest in perverting it; whereas there is not any instance where, when it has been left to the conduct of any set of ecclesiasticks whatsoever, they have not abused and sacrificed it to the advancement of their own wealth and power.

Even Aaron himself (though a high priest of God's own appointment) when Moses, the civil magistrate, was but a little while absent, to receive the Almighty's commands, cheated the Israelites of their earnings melted them into a golden calf, and encouraged the dupes to say these were the Gods which brought them out of the land of Egypt. He built an altar before his idol, proclaimed a fast, and then made use of all this deceit to extort from that stupid and superstitious people, burnt offerings and peace offerings. This provoked Almighty God to that degree, that his wrath was kindled against the whole nation, and he was inclined to consume them all, till Moses the lay sovereign, turned his fierce wrath by his prayers, and by remembering him of the oath he swore to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, namely, that he would multiply their seed like the stars in heaven, &c. And then it is true, that the Lord repented of the evil which he thought to do unto them. But so thanks to the priest who had drawn them into this scrape. Exod. Chap. 32. T.

NUMBER 14.

The Clergy proved to be creatures of the civil power, by the canons, and their own public acts.

In my last discourse, I have shewn what is meant by the supremacy of the crown of England; by virtue of which, our kings sometimes with, and sometimes without their parliaments, have governed and modelled the ecclesiastical state. ever since the reformation, bishops, as well as inferiour clergymen, have been often suspended and deprived by the king's authority; and, in the instance of archbishop Abbot, for his pleasure. The popish bishops were all deprived by queen Elizabeth, and some thousands of the parochial clergy were ejected by the act of uniformity; and many also of all orders were deprived at the revolution.

I shall now proceed to shew what have been the opinions and practice of the whole body of the ecclesiasticks, since the making of these laws; in doing which, I shall take notice only of their public and authentick acts: for as to the whimsys of private doctors, I think them

of so little weight, that I shall be ashamed to quote them on either side of the question.

Upon the clergy's owing the king head of the church at the reformation, all the bishops took out commissions for the exercising their ecclesiastical jurisdiction; which were renewed again upon his son's coming to the throne. In these commissions, all ecclesiastical jurisdiction is owned to proceed from the crown, as from a supreme head and fountain and spring of all magistracy, in the kingdom; and they acknowledge, that they executed it formerly only *ex precario*, and that now with grateful minds they accepted the favour from the king's liberty and indulgence, and would be always ready to yield it up again, when his majesty pleased to require it.

These commissions recited, amongst other particulars of spiritual power, that of ordaining presbyters, and of ecclesiastical correction.

The 2d canon excommunicates every one who shall endeavour to hurt or extenuated the king's authority in ecclesiastical cases, as it is settled by the laws of the kingdom, and declares he shall not be restored till he has publickly recanted such impious errors.

The 37th canon obliges all persons, to their utmost, to keep and observe all and every one of the statutes and laws, made for restoring to the crown, the ancient jurisdiction it had over the ecclesiastical state.

The 12th of king James' canons declares, that whoever shall affirm that it is lawful for the order either of ministers or laicks, to make canons, decrees, or constitutions in ecclesiastical matters, without the king's authority, and submits himself to be governed by them, is, *ipso facto*, excommunicated, and is not to be absolved before he has publickly repented and renounced these anabaptistical errors.

Archbishop Bancroft, when, at the head of all the bishops in England, he delivered articles to king James against the secular courts, for encroaching upon the ecclesiastical, owns, that all jurisdictions, ecclesiastical as well as civil, are annexed to the imperial crown of this realm, as may be read more at large in the lord Coke's third institute; which I would recommend to the perusal of every one, as a specimen of the difference between ecclesiasticks and laymen.

I shall think it necessary only here to add, that the clergy have never presumed, by any publick act, directly to controvert this prerogative, or indeed even to nibble at it, unless in one instance during the last reign; which the queen resented highly, and let the convocation know, by a letter to the archbishop, that she was resolved to maintain her supremacy, as a fundamental part of the constitution of the church of England.

This is the supremacy of the crown; these are the genuine principles of the church of England; which whoever denies, may be a papist, a presbyterian, a muggletonian, a fifth-monarchy man, or any thing else, besides a member of our communion. This doctrine, and these opinions, have been acknowledged and sworn to by every ecclesiastick since the reformation; and we daily see they are all ready to swear them over again upon any fresh motives of advantage; and sure no one will suggest, that the whole clergy of England have lived in the state of perjury for near two hundred years: I am sure, if this be the case, it is not their interest to let us know it, since their authority must be of very little weight in any thing else.

- We have it here upon oath, that all jurisdiction, power and authority, spiritual or ecclesiastical, of what kind or sort soever it be, does flow from, and is derived from the king's majesty ; and I readily allow them to have all the rest by divine right. They have been always very happy at distinctions and discoveries, and therefore if they can find out any power or authority, which is of no kind or sort whatsoever, I think they ought to have it for their pains : I wish them much joy with it ; and shall own it always to be sacrilege in any one who shall attempt to take it from them : but, if there be any such thing, it is plain, that it belongs to them as governours of the invisible church, and is of a nature which we know nothing of.

For it is certain, that archbishops and bishops are creatures of the civil power, and derive their being and existence from it. They are chosen by the direction of one act of parliament, and ordained and consecrated according to a model prescribed by another ; in which those who officiate, act only ministerially ; and all other methods of choosing them which the clergy can devise, are declared void and ineffectual, and will not convey any spiritual power at all : nor, I dare say, will any clergyman in England pay submission to such a choice, if he do not like the man ; nor if he do, provided he thinks that he shall lose any thing by it. If the bishops have no power but what they derive from the crown, they can convey none but of the same sort to the inferiour clergy.

I durst not have stood the imputation of calumny, in charging any of the present clergy with principles or practices so directly in defiance of these glaring and notorious declarations of the whole body, as well as their own repeated oaths and subscriptions, if I had not the authority of the brightest luminary of the present church and age (our great metropolitan) to bear me out, who assures us in his appeal, "that a new sort of disciplinarians are arisen up from amongst ourselves, who seem to comply with the government of the church, much upon the same account as others do with that of the state ; not out of conscience to their duty, or any love they have for it ; but because it is the established church, and they cannot keep their preferments without it : they hate our constitution, and all who stand up in good earnest for it ; but for all that they hold fast to it ; and so go on to subscribe and rail."

To these wild and enthusiastick notions we owe the present disaffection ; and most, if not all the calamities and public disturbances that have happened since the revolution ; and yet (which is amazing to think of) they have prevailed so far amongst the corrupt part of the ecclesiasticks, that I wish we could find more even of the low-church clergymen, who dare thoroughly to renounce these impious and anabaptistical errors as their own canons call them.

Dominion ! dominion is the loud cry ; which, as it has already produced all the cruelties and absurdities of popery, so it is still teeming with, or bringing forth new monsters ; and what other issue can be expected from so unnatural a copulation as that of the Christian priesthood with worldly power ?

To this we are beholden for all the corruptions and fopperies brought into religious worship, as well as the ill-shapen and ungainly brats of passive obedience ; the divine right of kings and bishops ; the

uninterrupted succession ; the priests power of the keys ; of binding and loosing ; remitting and retaining sins ; the real presence in the sacrament ; the altar, and unbloody sacrifice upon it ; the giving the Holy Ghost ; of excommunication, as laid claim to ; and consecration of churches and church-yards ; the reconciliation of God's knowing what we shall do with a power in us not to do it ; of persecution for opinions, and the tritheistical charity ; with a long train of monkish fooleries besides : all, or any part of which, could never have entered into the heart of one layman, or clergyman either, if nothing had been to be got by them. T.

NUMBER 15.

The absurdity and impossibility of church-power, as independent on the State.

I HAVE shewn, in my last two discourses, that the clergy of England have no jurisdiction, power, or authority whatsoever, which is not derived mediately or immediately from the legislature ; and that they have all sworn to this principle : I now own myself so much concerned for their reputation, that I will even run the hazard of incurring the displeasure of some of them, by proving, that they have taken true oaths, and that it is impossible to constitute a protestant national church upon any other foundation.

I intend to shew, in the course of these papers, that there is not the least colour or pretence for the chimerical distinction of ecclesiastical and civil, in any other sense than as the words maritime and military, are used to denote different branches of the executive power ; for, take away the legal establishment, and the clergy can have no power at all but what flows from the consent of voluntary societies ; a proposition which I undertake hereafter demonstratively to make out ; and I defy all the ecclesiasticks in the world, united together, to take one step towards proving the contrary, without plunging themselves in everlasting nonsense and absurdity.

But to keep them a little in good humour, I will suppose, for the present, that their wild hypothesis is true ; and that our Saviour, whilst upon earth, (even against his own declarations) had ecclesiastical jurisdiction over the whole earth ; that he gave it to the apostles ; that they conveyed it on to their successors ; and that the church of Rome, and the present clergy of the church of England, as by law established, are their undoubted successors ; nay, I will be so civil as not to ask one question, what sort of power that was ? But take it for granted that it was worldly authority, and ought to be rewarded and supported by worldly equipage, wealth, and titles ; and if they have any thing more to ask of me, I will grant that too, and then examine what use can be made of these concessions to the present purpose.

I desire first to be informed, from whence they will fetch their ecclesiastical heraldry of archbishops, diocesan bishops, deans, chapters, arch-deacons, the new office of deacons, officials, commissaries, the two houses of convocation with co-ordinate powers, ecclesiastical courts, parish priests, and curates, with the whole train of inferior machines, and spiritual under-strappers. Here I doubt all their texts, all their schemes will fail them; for very few of these hard names will be found even in their own translations of the bible, and they must have recourse to human authority at last.

If they say, (as I suspect they will) that the government of the church being conveyed down to the bishops from the apostles, they must have all power which is necessary to it; and consequently have a right to appoint courts of judicature, and ecclesiastical officers, as also to give them proper powers to answer the ends of their trust:

I would then ask them, whether this great episcopal authority is given to every bishop, independent of all the rest; to all the bishops of the whole church every where dispersed, agreeing together; to the majority of this whole; or to the majority of any number of them meeting in one place, either by consent, accident, or the appointment of princes or states? for, I think, it must be agreed by all the world, that if the bishops had any power from God, which is independent of the civil sovereign, he cannot restrain, model, or limit it; and that any accidental alterations of the bounds of dominions, either from conquest, chance or consent, can no way affect this divine authority, or hinder its operation.

If every bishop has this whole power delegated to him from God; then by what authority can the exercise of it be afterwards restrained to a particular district or diocese, so as to make his actions out of it, not only invalid, but schismatical and criminal? Who can limit a power given by the Almighty? Not the civil sovereign, who has nothing to do in another jurisdiction; nor the bishop himself, who must accept it upon the terms which God has given it.

It cannot be supposed that he receives it for his own sake, but as a trust for the benefit of Christianity; and it must be the highest breach of this great trust, not to discharge it personally, but to divide it with others, of whose honesty he can have no sufficient knowledge.

Besides, when these bishops differ with one another, (which will happen as often as they have different complexions, interests, or understandings) what must the Christian world then do? Must they follow the bishop of Bangor,* or the abbot of W—nst—r?† Or suspend their Christianity till they are all agreed? A solid rock truly to build God's church upon!

So great a body of men as the whole Christian church, or the majority of them, never did, or could meet together; and if such a thing were possible, they would only scold or fight; and therefore any one may with great modesty affirm, that no ecclesiastical establishment now in the world did, or could, take its rise from such an assembly.

Nothing therefore remains, but that, once upon a time, a certain number of bishops met together, and settled such constitutions, from

* Dr. Benjamin Hoadley.

† Dr. Francis Atterbury, late bishop of Rochester, and dean of Westminster.

which the rest are derived ; otherwise we must fetch them from the civil magistrate, or confess them all to be usurpations.

Those who suppose the first, are obliged to tell us what number are necessary to this purpose ; and if another equal number should settle a different establishment in the same district or province, who will be the schismatics : I think it is agreed by all high-churchmen, that every one of these can make as many other bishops, and governours of the whole church, as he pleases ; and therefore if one of them in a frolicksome humour should create two or three hundred of these ecclesiastical princes, are they all to have votes in the episcopal college ? And I ask this question the rather, because I myself once knew a drunken popish bishop in Ireland, who would have made these spiritual sovereigns from morning to night, for a pot of ale a-piece.

If it should be said (as indeed what is not or may not be said by persons of their perspicuity ?) that the power itself comes from God, but the exercise of it is to be limited and directed by the civil sovereign ; I answer, that, besides the egregious blunder of distinguishing between power and the exercise of power, the first being only a right to do certain actions, in which the other consists : this gives up the whole question ; for there can be no greater power necessary to give an authority than to take it away ; and every restriction and limitation is taking it away in part : No one can have a right to depose a temporal prince from any part of his just dominions, without having also the same right to deprive him of the whole ; and in this respect there can be no difference between temporal and ecclesiastical sovereignties.

If these gentlemen were not in possession of sanctifying nonsense, they could not venture to tell us, that our Saviour has given power to bishops to execute ecclesiastical jurisdiction through the whole earth ; and consequently all mankind must be their spiritual subjects : But that this great power may here below be limited and restrained to cities or provinces, and parcelled out and divided in such a manner, that some may have large districts, others small ones, in which no one else must officiate ; nay, that many more may have none at all, and yet that every one have universal jurisdiction, and be a bishop of the whole earth.

These, with a huge heap besides of glaring absurdities and contradictions, must be maintained by those, who would reconcile the divine right of bishops with any protestant establishment now in the world. I have so amply shewn how inconsistent it is with our own, from the whole tenor of our laws and canons, as well as the repeated acknowledgments of the clergy themselves, that I should think it not only needless, but impertinent, to say any thing further of it, did we not daily hear of such numbers of our spiritual guides, who rail against these laws at the time they swear and subscribe to them, and complain aloud of them as violations of their own divine rights, and denounce judgments upon the nation for such usurpations.

I shall, therefore, in my next paper descant a little upon the voluntary and most applauded actions of the highest, even of these high gentlemen ; and shew that they cannot help acknowledging the principle which I maintain, even in the instances where they would oppose it, and amidst their greatest demands for power. This I intend to do, not with the least expectation or vain hope of inducing them to alter

measures, (their being a prescription among the ecclesiasticks to such lay follies,) but (if possible) to open the eyes of their and stupid adorers, and to let them see what wretched idols they are worshipping.

T.

NUMBER 16.

inconsistency of the principles and practices of High-Church; with some advice to the Clergy.

the ecclesiasticks have any divine right, which is neither derived from the civil magistrate, nor the consent of voluntary societies, it is not vested in a single person; in a certain number of persons, we all call bishops; or in common to them all: The first is the episcopacy, and the last presbytery. But I think that there is no establishment which now subsists, or ever did subsist in the world, which ever did assert the divine right of bishops, independent of the pope; consequently it is the *proprium* or peculiar whimsy of our own educated high-churchmen, not only in opposition to their oaths and professions (as I have shewed already) but to the most applauded actions of their greatest champions; which 'tis the business of this paper to make out.

There be a divine right in the bishops to govern the church, it is a civil rebellion, and the highest sacrilege, to usurp upon this great prerogative; but then, what will become of all the daily daubing and the panegyrick upon the best established church in the world?

I think it is agreed by all the clergy, that the power of legislation as far as they have any thing to do with it, is vested in the common council, which consists of two houses, one of bishops, the other of presbyters; a constitution utterly inconsistent with this divine right; the high-clergy have been so far from regretting or complaining that it is one of their most essential characteristics, to maintain the power of the lower house against the upper; that is, of presbyters against their own diocesans.

They claim a co-ordinate power with them in the supremest acts of civil government; an authority of acting by themselves, to choose their own time of meeting, to sit as often and as long as they please, to transact business by their own authority, to begin what business they think proper, to choose their own committees, excuse absence, receive proxies, to annul the effects of elections, censure their own members, and do all other acts, which ought to be done by the sole authority of a house which is its master and judge: all which, though they are rank presbytery, have also become the genuine principles of modern high-churchmen; at the same time that they assert a sole, divine, apostolick, and independent power in the bishops to govern the church.

The asserting of these rights of the lower house, is the merit of their present champion,* supplies the want of charity in him, and covers a thousand faults ; and 'tis much to be feared and lamented, that all the late zeal of a much greater man,† and the present services which he is doing, will scarcely atone for his having acted formerly upon low-church principles, in defending the prerogative of the crown, and maintaining the power of the upper-house over the lower.

What persons or party have supported the Bishops and their authority, ever since the revolution, against their own presbyters ? All low-churchmen. Who were those who have been always aspersing, calumniating and libelling the two last arch-bishops, our present metropolitan, till very lately, the last bishop of Salisbury, and indeed every worthy prelate ; but the high church priests and their followers ? And who have honoured and defended their persons and characters, but low-churchmen.

Who exhibited articles against a present bishop, for having impeached the King's supremacy in ecclesiastical affairs. (wholly inconsistent with the divine right of bishops) but the high-church clergy ? Who supported the late dean of Carlisle against his own diocesan ? All high-churchmen. And who defended both these bishops ? All low-churchmen. Who burnt by the hands of the common hangman, a book wrote by a right reverend bishop, which asserted King William's title upon the once genuine principles of conquest, and passed a scandalous and groundless vote upon the late learned bishop of Worcester, but high-churchmen ? And who voted for these bishops ? All low churchmen.

Such open blunders and glaring inconsistencies must these men be reduced to, who measure all opinions by their present interest and passions ; and who have no other standard of right and wrong, but what most gratifies their ambition, pride, covetousness, or revenge.

I can safely say, that, as I had no interest in entering upon this design, nor can have any in continuing it, but to promote the cause of virtue and truth, and to support our present legal establishment ; by shewing the laity that they are free, both by the laws of God and their country, from all the wild and enthusiastick pretensions of the high flown ecclesiasticks ; as I was willing also, not wholly to despair of being able to restore again the apostate clergymen to the church of England, and to make them really of the principles which they swear to, pretend to monopolize, and yet constantly oppose ; so I shall have the utmost pleasure, if I can contribute to these great ends, and shall rejoice over such an occasion, to drop this paper.

As the high-clergy can have no other motive to pursue these principles, but the temporal interest of their order, in opposition to Christianity, and the apparent laws of their country ; so I shall endeavour to convince them, that they are grasping at what they can never reach ; and, with the dog in the fable, losing a substance to catch at a shadow.

It was a saying of the wise lord Halifax, that Dr. Echard, in his treatise of the contempt of the clergy, had omitted the chief cause o'it,

* Dr. Francis Atterbury, late bishop of Rochester.

† Dr. William Wake, archbishop of Canterbury.

namely, (not their ignorance, but) the knowledge of the laity ; and it is very true, that the mists of superstition and fear, which have been so long raising before our eyes, are pretty well dissipated and dispersed ; nor will an horizontal hat, a starched band, and long petticoats, pass in this age for essential marks of wisdom and virtue.

The rehearsal has long since told us, that the gravest of all beasts is an ass, and the gravest of all birds is an owl ; and indeed the world seems generally of opinion now, that sound sense, polite learning, good breeding, and an easy and affable conversation, are not only consistent with true religion, but are most productive of it ; and sure it cannot be denied, that the laity, for the most part, exceed in these qualities.

They are resolved, at last, to see with their own eyes, hear with their own ears, and feel with their own hands : *Ipsæ dixit* will pass no longer. It is a ridiculous attempt to endeavour to deceive any one, who will not consent to be hood-winked. A jade will not be put into an horse-mill, till she is blinded ; nor could Sampson be led about by the Philistines, till they had put out his eyes ; I would therefore give my old friends a hint, though I doubt to little purpose, namely, to change the course of their sailing, according to the shifting of the winds and the tides, and not run the danger of shipwreck upon those coasts, where their predecessors formerly found deep water and safe riding.

I am sensible, that many of the high-church popish clergy will laugh in their sleeves at this advice, and think there is folly enough yet left among the laity, to support their authority ; and will hug themselves, and rejoice over the ignorance of the universities, the stupidity of the drunken squires, the panic of the tender sex, and the never to be shaken constancy of the multitude ; but I would put them in mind, that all these fine visions have once already misled and deceived them, and therefore may again.

I desire that they will count their gains, and recollect what addition of power they got, or were like to have got, by the late great revolution of temporal politicks, which they were so instrumental to bring about ; indeed they were called together, and had a liberty given them to scold and quarrel with one another ; but they were not suffered to hurt so much as a mouse ; and even Mr. Whiston laughed at them. Whilst their patrons were making their court to France and the pretender, for preferments ; the lower house of convocation was very usefully employed and diverted, in compiling forms of prayer for consecrating church-yards, and for criminals who were to be hanged ; which 'tis said a certain great person then called throwing out a barrel to the whale.

I am afraid that they are not well informed of what it much concerns them to know, namely, that even the Tories themselves will not be priest-ridden ; and those amongst them, who have any sense, laugh at high-church principles in private, though they bow to the broachers of them, and seem to admire them in publick ; of the truth of which I myself have been a witness ; so that of whatever importance they may seem to themselves, they are, in truth, but tools to factious men ; are only employed to do their drudgery, and run down their game ; and will scarce have for their pains even the picking of the bones, when (like jackals) they have hunted down the lion's prey.

I should not have thought myself at liberty to have unburthened my mind thus freely, if it had not been to have served some of my friends among these high-church clergy, by helping them to a little of that understanding, which is not to be learnt in universities, and in conversation with one another; and I wish, (though I cannot hope, much less persuade myself to believe) that when they have duly considered what I have said, they will change their style, and endeavour to atone for all the mischiefs which they have hitherto done, by being hereafter advocates for civil and ecclesiastickal liberty; will make the influence they have over the poor deluded multitude to promote true religion, as well as peace and happiness amongst mankind; and be no longer the boute-feus or incendiaries of every popular faction and tumult. Which God of his infinite mercy grant, &c. T.

NUMBER 17.

Reasons why the high-church priests are the most wicked of all men.

It seems natural and reasonable to suppose, that clergymen, who have a learned, ingenious, and Christian education; who are bred up in strict discipline; who in their youth study the works of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and other heathen moralists; as also the books of the old and new testament, which they believe to be divinely inspired; who attend daily prayers, and frequent sacraments; who pretend to have a call from the Holy Ghost to teach the world; who spend a great part of their time in composing divine discourses or sermons; who are obliged to pray and converse daily with weak, sick, and scrupulous parishoners, about heavenly matters; who, by conversation and close union with one another at visitations, and other holy meetings, and (I presume) by prayers together, have great opportunities of improving themselves in virtue and godliness; and who are under a particular obligation to set good examples, and under a sort of necessity to observe some decorum; should be better than other men. But yet, it is a matter of common observation, that they are not so; almost all in the Roman church, and too many in other churches, being in an eminent degree notoriously guilty of those vices, which are of most pernicious or most extensive ill consequences, and most anti-Christian; such as ambition, pride, anger, hatred, malice, revenge, litigiousness, uncharitableness, hypocrisy, persecution, sedition, treason, equivocation, and perjury; (whereof multitudes of the laity are not only wholly innocent, but remarkable for the virtues opposite to them;) to say nothing of their equal guilt with other men in respect to the inferiour vices of swearing, drunkenness, and such like. And this fact is honestly confessed by the late bishop of Sarum, who in his memoirs (which we expect with the utmost impatience soon to see published) tells us, "that he always believes well of laymen, till he sees cause to change his mind; though, as to churchmen, it is otherwise with him;

for he has seen so much amiss in that profession, that he is inclined always to think ill of them, till he sees cause to think otherwise."

Whereupon it is a frequent subject of enquiry, how it comes to pass or what are the causes of this fact, which would never be credited if it was not very manifest. Some are at a loss about this matter; but, for my part, I am not. And the fact is no more surprising to me, than are other common facts concerning men; which, by being common, must have plain and manifest causes. The causes of this fact, in particular, are so plain to me, that from the mere consideration of them, I should wonder if I found the clergy better than they are; and I esteem those causes to be so necessarily productive of their effect, that I do not think it presumption to pretend to know the doings of the high-clergy, in all ages to have been wicked, even without history or testimony, which are requisite to give us the knowledge of other men's crimes. Grotius's observation,* *qui legit historiam ecclesiasticam, quid legit nisi vitia episcoporum?* must be true, and justly applied to all other clergy as well as the Christian.

It is not the design of this paper, to assign the general causes of this fact, or all the particular causes, which render so many of our clergy so bad as they are. That subject I reserve for a treatise by itself. I shall at present only assign some of those causes, which I conceive to have the most direct influence on the morals of so many of our clergy.

Youth is the great opportunity of life, which settleth and fixeth most men either in a good or bad course; and the impressions, especially bad impressions, then made, are usually lasting. Youth is also a time of innocence, when men have horror for vice, which they never commit at first without offering violence to themselves. The first and most natural thoughts of man are to be honest and just, and reasonable, as the best things which he can do for his own sake; and it is the influence of ill example, and of the common practice of the world, which, for the most part, changes his sentiments, and puts him upon ill actions. But the natural innocence of youth being once broke in upon, man by degrees grows hardened and impudent in wickedness, and commits it without shame or remorse.

Nothing therefore has so direct a tendency to debauch the world, as to debauch the youth: and the earlier, the more effectual; for thereby innocence and virtue may be so effaced, as in a little time to leave no memory or trace of them, no more than Quartilla in Petronius Arbitrator had, who, though a young woman, did not remember that she had ever been a maid.

Now it seems to me peculiar to the clergy, in most parts of Christendom, to begin the world with the greatest breach upon the natural honesty and integrity of youth, and with the greatest violence upon their own consciences, that can be imagined; as will be evident from the following particulars.

1. First, the youth who are sent to universities are early initiated into perjury, by being obliged to take college oaths, in some respects impertinent or ridiculous, in others wicked, or impossible to be kept; by which means, false swearing becomes familiar to them, and they es-

* Ecclesiastical history, nothing else but a detail of the villanies of priests

teem oaths only as matters of form, and their breach to be but common qualifications for preferment.

2. Secondly, when they go into holy orders, they profess, that they are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them their office : though nothing is more notorious, than that many are inwardly moved by the prospect of power and wealth, and by necessity of a maintenance ; and that many use all the arts and means, to no purpose, to procure to themselves law and physick fellowships in colleges, and other lay-preferments, (where no engagements contrary to their judgments and consciences are requisite) in order to avoid the burden of going into orders : and by consequence, they feel no inward motions of the Holy Ghost ; unless the Holy Spirit can be supposed constantly to concur, just as serves the purposes of men engaged in the pursuit of their temporal interests. Here then is a solemn lye and prostitution of the conscience, in all those who do not feel themselves moved by the Holy Ghost.

3. Thirdly, many of the clergy abroad subscribe articles of religion, which they do not believe. Mr. Whiston (*Essays, &c.* p. 237.) says, “ he believes there is scarce one clergyman, even of our reformed church, that has considered and examined things with any care, who believes all the 39 articles in their proper and original meaning.” This implies, that the unbelievers, among the clergy, of the articles, are very numerous ; unless it be supposed, that few of the clergy consider and examine things with any care. But the thing is manifest from the sophistry and knavery used by many of them to palliate their subscription to the articles ; which imply, that they do not believe those articles. (1.) Some pretend to subscribe them as articles, which, though in part erroneous, they oblige themselves not to contradict. (2.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any sense, wherein they can understand them according to the rules of grammar. (3.) Some pretend to subscribe them in any sense, wherein they can reconcile them to scripture. (4.) And others choose the sense, which they pretend to subscribe them in, out of the several senses which they suppose intended to be held forth by the same articles. And I wish more of them pretended to subscribe them honestly and fairly, namely, in the sense really intended by the imposers, who, to prevent diversity of opinions, impose their own sense, as agreeable to scripture ; and therefore cannot be supposed to have intended, that the articles should differ from all other writings, which all readers endeavour to understand in the one meaning intended by the authors. Nay, to subscribe the articles without believing them, is so reputable among the high-church priests, that a fair subscriber, that is, one who subscribes in the one sense which he supposes originally intended, passes amongst them for the worst of men, namely, a presbyterian, and an enemy to the church.

4. Fourthly, every clergyman instituted into any benefice, swears, that he has made no simoniacal payment, contract or promise, directly or indirectly, by himself, or by any other, to his knowledge, or with his consent, to any person or persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring and obtaining of his ecclesiastical dignity, place, preferment, office or living, (respectively and particularly naming the same whereunto he is to be admitted, instituted, collated, in-tailed, or confirmed)

nor will at any time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of payment, contract or promise, made by any other, without his knowledge or consent ; so help him God through Jesus Christ. Now, whether any of them break this oath, I leave to the consideration of the reader who ought to esteem all clergymen taking it guilty, that either make presents to any body, or marry, or compound with the patron about tythes, in order to get the benefice ; no less than those who, by bargain, pay money before or after the benefice is procured, are guilty.

5. Fifthly, an oath of allegiance to his majesty king George is taken by all beneficed clergymen ; who may be justly deemed perjured, if they do not pay the same regard to his majesty, which they pretend to have been due to king Charles the first, or second, or to queen Anne at the beginning and latter end of her reign. The popularity and credit, to which this perjury entitles the high-church clergy among one another, and the disgrace attending those who are faithful to the oaths which they have taken, (the former being dubbed by them honest men, and good churchmen for breaking their oaths ; and the latter rogues and betrayers of the church for keeping them ;) leaves us no room to doubt, that the, perjured of this kind are but too numerous. However, I am willing to think it would be injustice to say, that many laymen need not go out of their own parishes, to find one at least, and often more, where there are lecturers and curates.

The difficulty therefore mentioned in the beginning of this paper, admits of a plain solution ; and it is as easy to conceive, that men, who begin the world in this manner, should exceed others in wickedness ; who either begin the world innocently, or are under no necessity to begin it wickedly ; as it is to conceive, that butchers and soldiers should be less humane than others, or that young women once prostituted, should lose all modesty.

C.

NUMBER 18.

A general idea of Priest-Craft.

I have in my eighth and other papers, vindicated the Almighty from the imputation of obscurity in revealing his will to mankind ; and shewn, that he is plain, exact, and even circumstantial, when he delivers his precepts to them. I shall now expose the contrary proceedings of weak and corrupt men ; by giving a general idea of the principal arts, by which the designing priests of all religions have kept their craft and impostures from a discovery, and made the truth as far as they could, inaccessible.

Every mad action, or principle, in religion and government, must have some appearing cause assigned for it, proper to make the people stare, and to hide the true one. Mankind, as tame as priests and tyrants have made them, will not be content to be deceived or butchered without having a reason for it. The pope, who assumes a power to

judge for all men, and devotes whole nations to damnation and massacre, and sends people to heaven or hell in colonies, just as their money or disobedience determines him, acts a very consistent part in tying the keys of both worlds to his girdle, and in stiling himself God's absolute vicar general. These are his reasons; and the catholick and more orthodox parts of Europe are well content with them.

In former reigns, when many of our English clergy thought fit to tie us hand and foot, and deliver us over to our kings, as their proper goods and chattels, to be fed or slayed according to their sacred will and pleasure, they told us, it was the ordinance of God, that one man might glut his lust, or his cruelty, with the destruction of millions, and if we kept out of harm's way, we were assuredly damned. And these were their reasons then. Of late, it is true, many of them have changed their doctrine and their behaviour. We are, it seems, at present living in the guilt of rebellion, which is a damnable sin; and so we are to rebel upon pain of damnation, to free ourselves from the damnation which follows rebellion. These are their reasonings now.

Formerly, when some certain persons were content to be protestants the church of Rome was a spiritual Babylon, and the scarlet whore, and Sodom; and the pope was anti-Christ; for he sat in the temple of God, and exalted himself above all that is called God. But this was truth, and could not hold long, considering into whose hands it was fallen; and therefore in a little time, when they had a mind to get into the pope's place, and to do and say as he did, the church of Rome became all of a sudden a true church, and an old church, and our mother church. In short, the old withered harlot and mother of whoredoms grew a great beauty, and her daughter here in England resembled her mamma more and more every day she lived, and gave the foregoing reasons for it.

From hence it is plain, that though for every imposture some cause must be assigned, yet a very indifferent one will serve the turn. The gross of the world are dull and credulous: Few make any enquiries at all, and fewer make successful ones. It is, however, still best if the cheat stands upon such a foundation, that it cannot be searched nor examined by any human eye.

When Numa Pompilius told the Romans, that he conversed familiarly with the nymph Egeria; which of them could pay her a visit, and ask her whether the prince and she were in earnest such very good neighbours? And when Mahomet took such a wide range through the other world upon his nag Elborach, and told wonders at his return; there was neither man nor horse in all Arabia, that could take the same journey to disprove him; or when he was pleased to be thought conversant with the angel Gabriel, I do not hear that ever the angel signed a certificate that they were no wise acquainted. The quack who had found out the true fern seed and the green dragon, thought it no doubt, a hard matter to prove him a liar.

In the heathen temples of old, neither the Sybils, nor any other priests or belchers of prophecy, male or female, were answerable for the oracles and dark sayings which they uttered. They had what they said from God, who never once contradicted them. It was impossible to come at him for personal information; and a very profane crime not to believe his priest; and to distrust the deity himself was almost as

bad ; you had nothing to do, but to captivate your reason to your faith, and swallow the *verbum sacerdotis*. If you did not, the judgment of the God, that is, the anger of the priest was sure to pursue you.

The same policy has ever been practised by the deluders of mankind in all names and shapes. They have always entrenched themselves behind the ramparts of mystery, uncertainties and terrors. The Romish clergy maintain all their pretensions and power by doctrines, which are calculated to make the people either wonder or tremble. And when a man has lost his courage and his understanding, you may easily cheat or terrify him into as tractible an animal as the creation affords. The doctrines of purgatory, and of the priests power to forgive or damn, are alone strong enough to frighten most folks into what liberality and submission the church thinks fit to demand of them. And we all know that she is not over modest upon such occasions. Bring me all thou hast and follow me is her style.

I wish I could keep these impostures and wild claims altogether out of England, and confine them to popish and infidel countries only. But that which is obvious and avowed cannot be hid. Very many of our high jacobite clergy aim at dominion by the same wicked means, and hood-wink and alarm us all they can. They lead us out of the road of reason, and play their engines in the dark ; and all the illumination we can get from them is, that we are all in a mist. Without their guidance we go astray, and with it we go blind-fold. All their arguments are fetched from their own authority. Their assertions are no less than rules and laws to us ; and where they lead we must follow, though into darkness and servitude. If we grow wilful, and break loose from our orthodox ignorance, we are pursued with hard names, and curses. Doubting is infidelity, reason is atheism. What can we do in this case ? There is no medium between a blockhead and a schismatick ; if we follow them blindly, we are the first ; the second if we leave them. We want faith, if we will not take their word ; we want eyes if we do.

They indeed give a sugar-plumb, and refer us to the bible for proof of all that they say. But, in truth, this privilege, if we examine it, will appear none at all ; but, on the contrary, an arrant trick, and gross mockery. For when they have sent us to a text, will they allow us to construe it our own way ? No such matter : They have nailed a meaning to it, and will permit it to bear no other. You may read, provided you read with their spectacles ; and examine their propositions freely, provided you take them every one for granted. You may exert your reason fully, but be sure let it be to no purpose ; and use your understanding independently, under their absolute direction and controul. I wonder how these men could ever have the front to accuse the church of Rome, for locking up the bible in an unknown tongue !

The eternal war that they wage against reason, which they use just as they do scripture, is founded upon good policy ; but it is pleasant to observe their manner of attacking it. They reason against reason, use reason against the use of reason, and shew, from very good reason that reason is good for nothing. When they think it on their own side, then they apply all its aids to convince or confound those who dare to think without their concurrence ; therefore, in their controversies about religion, they frequently appeal to reason ; but we must not ac-

cept the appeal, for if our reason be not their reason, it is no reason. They use it, or the appearance of it against all men ; but no man must use it against them. As there is no such thing as arguing and persuading without the assistance of reason, it is a little absurd, if not ungrateful, in these gentlemen to decry it at the same time they are employing it ; to turn the batteries of reason against reason, and make itself destroy itself.

Neither scripture, therefore, nor reason, by these rules signify any thing till the priests have explained them, and made them signify something ; and the word of God is not the word of God, till they have declared its sense, and made it so. Thus by the time that scripture and reason have been modelled, and qualified, and cooked up by the high-church jacobite clergy, they are neither scripture nor reason ; but a perfect French dish, or what the spiritual cooks please ; an oleo or hodge-podge of nonsense, jargon and authority.

From all that has been said, the following conclusions may be drawn. Such clergymen as I have been above describing, prove every thing by asserting it, and make any pretence support any claim. They build systems upon pretended facts, and argue from propositions which are either highly improbable, or certainly false. When they cannot convince, they confound us ; when they cannot persuade they terrify. We have but two ways to try the truth of their doctrines, and the validity of their demands, namely, reason and revelation ; and they deprive us of both, by making the one dark, the other dangerous.

What a contempt must this tribe have for mankind !

G.

NUMBER 19.

Ecclesiastical authority, as claimed by the high-clergy, an enemy to religion.

SINCE there are so many different opinions and apprehensions in the world about matters of religion, and every sect and party does with so much confidence pretend, that they, and they only, are in the truth ; the great difficulty and question is, by what means men may be secured from dangerous errors, and mistakes in religion ? For this end some have thought it necessary, that there should be an infallible church, in the communion whereof every man may be secured from the dangers of a wrong belief : And others have thought it necessary, that their several fallible churches should have authority in matters of faith, in order to keep up a right faith in the people of the fundamentals of religion.

But it seems God has not thought either necessary : If he had, he would have revealed himself more plainly in this matter, than in any particular point of faith whatsoever. He would have told us expressly and in the plainest words, that he had appointed an infallible guide and judge in matters of religion, or men who should have authority in

matters of faith; and would likewise have plainly marked out him or them, for men to have had recourse to on all occasions; because our belief depending on this infallible judge, or on these men who had authority, we could not be safe from mistake in particular points, without so plain and clear a revelation of this infallible judge, or of these men who had authority, that there could be no mistake about him or them; nor could there be an end of any other controversies in religion, unless this matter of an infallible judge, or of men who had authority, were out of our controversy.

It is not pretended by any advocates of infallibility or authority, that God has delivered the matter expressly and plainly in the scriptures. They proceed, and build only on inferences and deductions from thence. And the papists are divided among themselves as to the seat and extent of infallibility; as the protestant papists are, in respect to the seat and extent of authority. And both infallibility and authority are manifestly absurd pretences in point of reason; though infallibility seems less absurd than authority. The pretence of infallibility is plainly absurd; because the infallible church gives constant and daily proofs of its fallibility: And the pretence of authority is absurd; because, that may lead men into any mistakes whatsoever. But, as I observed, infallibility is less absurd; because that is of a piece, and consistent with, and necessarily follows from authority: Whereas authority without infallibility, supposes a power given men by God to lead the world into any mistakes, and to subvert Christianity itself. But however this be, they are both sufficiently ridiculous; and it is ridiculous to send men, in order to their salvation, to believe either in the pope, or Dr. Swift, or Dr. Burgess, on whose authority, if men depend, they can only be papists, or Swifities, or Burgesites, and not Christians.

If then God has not provided an infallible judge, nor any men with authority in matters of religion; there is some other way, whereby men may be secured against all dangerous errors and mistakes in religion, and whereby they may discern all such truths as are necessary to their salvation. Now that way our Saviour has declared to us in these words, *If any man desire to do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself*: that is, if a man has an honest and sincere mind, and a hearty desire to do the will of God. he has the best preservative against dangerous mistakes in matters of religion; and God, or his understanding, will enable him to distinguish sufficiently, whether doctrines be of God or of men, and will conduct him into all necessary truths.

This is a true and plain answer to the question proposed; and also true and plain religion, or Christianity, if men will be governed by Christ, the author and finisher thereof. This is easy to be known, and requires little time to learn. This frees men from all concern about the intricate and endless squabbles of divines, disputing which of them are to have authority, and wherein their own authority consists; and ought to set them at ease; for, as Christians, or followers of Christ. they have nothing to do to enquire, what priests are to have an anti-Christian authority over one another and the laity.

But notwithstanding the plainness of the case, it is no wonder, that weak people now-a-days should believe in priests, and not in Christ.

should be priestlings, and not Christians; when, in our blessed Saviour's own time, the Jews were ready to believe in any impostor, and averse to believing in him, as he himself tells us. *I am come, says he, in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive: how can you believe, which receive honour one of another?* That is, (to make a sort of application to our present times) "you have the bible among you, wherein I teach you in my Father's name, wherein I bid you search, examine, and try all things for yourselves, and to call no man master in religion upon earth: That bible you reject, in not understanding it for yourselves; but if any man set up for an authoritative interpreter of it, him you will receive for your master, and call yourselves after his name. How can you be believers in, and followers of me, who believe upon the authority of men, and reject the authority of God?"

Christianity, or religion, thus truly understood, has too many enemies to make it lost labour to prove it true by arguments. And therefore I observe, in proof of our Saviour's doctrine, "That a hearty desire and endeavour to do the will of God, is the best preservative against dangerous mistakes." First, that therein our Saviour recommends the best and most proper disposition of mind to qualify a man to receive truths from God, and to enable him to make a right judgment as to what proceeds from God, and what from men. For a good man is most likely to have right apprehensions of God and divine things. Secondly, such a disposition in a man supposes his impartiality in the search of truth; that he has no partiality to any particular doctrine; and that he is superiour to the temptations of any passions, (which blind the mind) and has no reason to deceive himself by receiving things without evidence; nor inclination to reject what ~~the~~ evidence. Thirdly, God will not suffer the best disposed minds to fall into dangerous mistakes; but will, as he says himself, guide them in judgment, and shew them his way. Again, God says by Solomon, *If thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thy heart to understanding; yea, if thou cryest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding, if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasure; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.* Indeed, the bible is so plain, as to all necessary truths, that he that runs may read; and a day-labourer cannot fail of finding truth, that searches it there; and is in no danger of failing, unless he delivers himself up absolutely to some guide to interpret the bible for him. Fourthly, and lastly, living honestly, and seeking after truth, are the best things which a man can do, and the very perfection of his nature; and by consequence all that God, who is a good and reasonable being, can require of him.

I shall conclude this paper, which I have written in behalf of Christianity, and against Antichristianism, with another divine saying of our blessed Saviour: *He that speaketh of himself, seeks his own glory; but he that seeks his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no wrighteousness is in him.* As if he had said, "Hereby you may distinguish one that comes from God from an impostor. If any man seek his own glory and authority, you may conclude, that God has not sent him; but whatever he pretends, that he speaks of himself, preaches himself, and from himself: But he that seeks the honour of God, and not his own

interest, advantage and authority; by directing men to the authority of God alone; that man has no falsehood, no design to deceive; you may conclude him to be no deceiver or imposter." C.



THE FOLLOWING QUERIES AND LETTER, WROTE BY THE AUTHOR OF THE FOREGOING PAPER, AND NEVER BEFORE PRINTED, ARE THOUGHT PROPER TO BE HERE INSERTED.

Queries concerning Authority in matters of Faith.

1. Is there any authority among men in matters of faith?
2. Wherein does that authority consist?
3. Who are the men, that have that authority; and particularly, who are the men that have that authority in China, Turkey, France, Scotland, England, Hanover, Holland, and Sweden?
4. Have men in one country authority over others in another country in matters of faith; and who are those men that have that authority.
5. Are there any persons in the Roman communion, who have authority in matters of faith, over the other members of that communion; and who are they?
6. Are there any persons in the communion of the church of England, who have authority in matters of faith, over the other members of that communion; and who are they?
7. Have any person in the Roman church authority in matters of faith, over the members of the church of England?
8. If some persons of the church of England have an authority in matters of faith, over the other members of the church of England; and if no persons of the Roman church have such an authority over the other members of the Roman church: what reason can be assigned, for giving such authority to some persons of the church of England, over the other members of the church of England, that will not equally hold for giving such authority to some persons in the church of Rome, over the other members of the church of Rome?
9. If any persons in the Roman church have now authority in matters of faith, over the other members of the Roman church; were there not persons in the Roman church, who had such authority, before the reformation?
10. Have private people in the Roman church (that is, all but those who have an authority in matters of faith) any right to oppose those persons in the exercise of their authority, who have an authority in matters of faith in that church? are not private people obliged to submit to such, exercising their authority?
11. Have private people in the church of England any right to oppose those persons in the exercise of their authority, who have an authority in matters of faith in that church? Are not private people obliged to submit to such, exercising their authority?

12. Have private men in all churches a right to judge, whether the matters of faith of their church be erroneous or no ?

13. Have private men a right to separate from the communion of a church, whose matters of faith they judge to be erroneous ?

14. Have private men a right to separate from the communion of all churches, if they deem them all erroneous in matters of faith ?

15. Have private people, separating from the communion of all churches, as deeming them erroneous in matters of faith, a right to form a new church among themselves ? Or ought they to live without publick worship, and without being members of any particular church ?

16. If private men have a right to judge, whether the matters of faith received in their church be erroneous or no ; If they have a right to separate from the communion of a church, whose matters of faith they judge to be erroneous ; and from all churches, if they deem them erroneous in matters of faith : and if private people have a right to form a new church upon such separation from all churches : what authority in matters of faith can there be in any persons of any church ?

17. Will it not follow from the answers, that shall be given to the foregoing queries, either, that there can be no authority at all among men in matters of faith ; or that all authority in matters of faith rests in some person or persons in the Roman church ?

18. If there be an authority in matters of faith in some person or persons of the Roman church ; must not that person, or those persons, be infallible in the exercise of it ; that is, is not infallibility a consequence of authority ? Or at least, must not the said authority have the same effect, as infallibility, namely, produce an entire submission of mind and actions in the people subject to the said authority ?

19. If there be no authority among men in matters of faith ; and if every man has a right to judge for himself in matters of faith ; can the civil magistrate have a right to enact by law any articles (meaning such articles as have no relation to the peace of civil society) as matters of faith, by rewarding men to maintain them, and by punishing those who oppose them, or any way putting them upon a worse foot for their opposition than other subjects ? Does he not hereby set up for an authority in matters of faith, and invade the right of private judgment ?

20. If men have a right of private judgment in matters of faith ; ought the civil magistrate to hinder them from being free and impartial in the use of their private judgment ?

21. Is being rewarded for maintaining certain articles as matters of faith, and being punished, or suffering for opposing them, proper to produce a free and impartial use of our judgments, in relation to the truth or falshood of those matters of faith ? C.

A letter to a Clergyman, shewing the impossibility of assenting to what we do not understand.

REVEREND SIR,

LAST night I was surprized with yours of the 24th, relating to a conversation between us at Mr. B——'s, (above a year since) wherein

you say, that I maintained several paradoxes, the main whereof was, that a man cannot possibly give his assent to what he does not understand : but that you might possibly fall short in the defence of what you espoused ; and besides, was not solicitous what answers you gave me ; and therefore now write to me to prove the falshood of the paradox before mentioned, and (if I think you fail in it) to desire me to lay your mistakes before you.

I have read over your letter four or five times, in order to comply with you ; but not understanding what it is you say with respect to the point in question, I cannot possibly do it : for while I understand not, I can neither submit to the force of what you say, nor can I give you any answer to it. Understanding is with me not only a necessary part of religious belief ; but ought to be an ingredient in all reasoning and common discoursé ; and I can no more propose to talk about what I do not understand, than I can believe what I do not understand.

However, determining to write to you, I will endeavour to put you in the best method of conviction. I am able, though without any manner of design to convince you : for I desire you only to understand this letter, as a letter for a letter.

Since you proposed to convince me of the falshood of a proposition which I advanced and explained at large to you, your business was to refute it in the sense which I explained it. But, as far as I can understand your letter, you seem not to me to enter at all into the question.

For 1st, If you did, how could you make my assent to relations of matters of fact done before I was born, and relations of foreign countries which I never saw, to be proper instances to conceive me that I can assent to what I do not understand ; and appeal to my experience in the case, which I must tell you is against you : and I assure you, that I know not that I assent to any proposition about facts, whether they be past or present, or about things done at Rome or in England, but what I understand.

2dly, If you did enter into the question, how could you imagine it incumbent on me to shew, that whatever bears no relation to my understanding, can bear none to any other ? What has that to do with the question in dispute ? The question in dispute is as consistent with our ignorance of ten thousand things that exist, and with the supposition of other beings knowing more than we do, as any proposition that can be advanced, and by no means supposes our knowledge to reach the extent of things. What I affirm is, " that what cannot be understood by me, cannot be expressed to me in a proposition ; and what cannot be expressed to me in a proposition, cannot be assented to by me."

3dly, If you entered into the question, how could you imagine these words of St. Paul, we know in part, and we prophesy in part, to be decisive against me ? Where is the connection, we know in part, and we prophesy in part : Ergo, we can assent to what we do not understand ! For my part, I am so much a stranger to this way of arguing, that the connection is to me as remote, as if you had argued, I am a divine of the church of England as by law established, ergo, the laity must assent to what they cannot understand.

But to proceed to what I principally intend. The proposition which you call a paradox, is, in my opinion, self-evident to those who are capable of thinking, and understanding the terms ; is the foundation of all

discourse and meaning ; and unless two men agree in it, they want a common principle whereby to discourse and reason with one another, unless discourse among men be like discourse among jack-daws and parrots, mere sounds without sense or meaning, (which I own is an opinion I am not very remote from.) And therefore I can think of no better way than to explain the proposition in such a manner as you may understand it : and if what I say supposes the thing in dispute, viz.—That you must understand what I say, before you can assent to it ; I cannot help it, till I can find out a way to inform you without making you understand.

1. All assent whatever is to some proposition.

2. All propositions whatever, whether they relate to speculations or matters of fact, consist of words or terms that have each of them a distinct meaning ; and every proposition must at least have three words or terms, the extremes whereof are either denied or affirmed to have some agreement with one another.

3. Assent to a proposition is an assent to the meaning, or the thing signified by the terms of a proposition, and to no more than is signified by the terms.

4. Knowing the meaning of the terms of a proposition, is what I call understanding a proposition.

All this I take to be self-evident with relation to all propositions, whether they proceed from God or man, whether they teach us matter of fact or speculation ; and to put you in a way of apprehending it, I will put three cases, which will comprehend the whole dispute about mysteries.

1st. Suppose God, for the information of all mankind, causes a book to be published in Welsh, which among others contains the following proposition, three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost (each of which is a perfect God by himself) constitute one God. Now the state of my mind, with respect to this case, while I understand not the sense of the words in Welsh, is, that I am ignorant of the meaning of God's words, and consequently, do not assent to that meaning which is signified by them ; but knowing God to be truth itself, as soon as I do understand what God says, I am ready to give my assent to it.

2dly. Let the proposition be in English, the case is just the same. If the terms are used in ten thousand senses, and no two English authors, agree in putting the same sense of meaning on them, and God does not any where declare what he means by those terms, I am as much at a loss as if he spoke in Welsh, and must only say, that I am ready to assent as soon as I know to what.

3dly. and lastly, let us suppose that God publishes the foregoing proposition, and does at the same time only give us a partial and inadequate conception of the meaning of the terms, in respect of what they signify in the minds of angels, and other beings more enlightened than ourselves : It is evident, that our assent can only be to what God thinks fit to reveal : What he withholds from us is not signified to us by those terms, and as to that dark part, we can only profess our ignorance, and be ready to assent to more whenever he reveals more. And here I think it proper to answer a question you put to me, whether I admit or assent to any thing as true or probable, which is not in all its parts the object of my understanding ? To which I answer, that

as much sense and meaning as is conveyed to me about any thing by the terms of a proposition, I may admit or assent to as true or probable : But that part of any thing which is not conveyed to me by the terms of a proposition, is not a part of a proposition to me, and by consequence not the subject of assent.

So that, upon the whole, I take it to be clear, self-evident matter of fact, that a man cannot possibly assent to what he does not understand ; and by consequence, all perfectly mysterious propositions, and so much of any proposition as is mysterious, are matters about which we can exercise no other act of our minds but of humility, in professing our ignorance, and a readiness to be informed about them.

Pursuant to these notions, I readily profess to you and I think I may do it without vanity, since it is all men's duty to be Christians, that I think I understand all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith ; and that hereby I am ready to give a reason of the hope that is in me, and defend it against all objections, which I think every man is the more able to do, with respect to any cause, the better he understands it : But how any man can think himself a Christian, who owns that he understands not some of the articles necessary to be believed to make him one ; how he can preach a religion to others, which he professes not to understand, that is, how he can make others understand what he does not understand himself ; and how others can be persuaded to think themselves either the wiser or the better for hearing what they don't understand, (one of which you must allow to be the end of preaching) ; would be great mysteries to me, did I not by conversing with mankind see, that they generally consist of two sorts, learned parrots, and unlearned parrots : To the first whereof, absurdity is the peculiar privilege ; and to the latter ignorance ; for they have few or no notions, and no opportunity of taking those academical pains, which are absolutely necessary to make men absurd to any degree.

Another paradox that you fancy I advanced was, that the distinction of things above and contrary to reason, is a distinction without a difference. Whether I said so or no, I remember not : But as to the distinction, I answer briefly, that tell me clearly and distinctly what you mean by the words, (for I understand not your explication of them) and then I will tell you whether it be a distinction without a difference. Till you define the terms, so that I can know what you mean, I can understand nothing by them, and by consequence neither affirm, nor deny any thing about that distinction.

Though your letter contains so much which I do not understand, yet for your satisfaction, I will point out some questions started by you which I do understand. As,

1st. Whether I am sincere or no, (implied in these words, that you hope I am sincere.)

2dly. Whether I was in jest or in earnest, (implied in your doubting whether I was serious with you.)

3dly. Whether I believe the scriptures or no, (implied in your saying, if the authority of St. Paul might decide the controversy I must be silenced forever, &c.)

But these matters being purely personal, and no ways relating to the question, I give you no trouble about them. Besides, they are of no

use in a private letter, how good arguments soever they may be thought to clear a point in Divinity, either from the pulpit or the press.

I am, sir,

Your humble servant,

C.

NUMBER 20.

Of Chaplains.

As between the several acts of the most grave and solemn tragedies, it is allowed to divert the company with a dance or a song; so in this paper, I shall descend to entertain my readers with a dissertation upon chaplains, who are a sort of expensive domesticks, which none but great families can entertain. How or when this venerable piece of household stuff became first in use, is not certainly determined, that I know of; but it is certain, that he is left entirely out of the roll of ecclesiastical officers mentioned in the new-testament; his use and importance being not thought of, or forgot to be mentioned by St. Paul, though not by Mr. Collier, who has supplied the omission of the Apostle, and discovered the same.

It is likely that chaplains were first invented and brought into fashion, in the dark and barbourous ages; and so custom has continued what ignorance began. To these days of darkness is owing the marvellous increase of lazy monks and cheating friars; in which black swarm of reverend idlers, probably, first crept in this supernumerary levite. It is well known, that worthless and designing priests have always advanced and nourished superstition, being very sensible that it would in return nourish and multiply them. Thus priest-craft and bigotry beget each other; and being so near a-kin, perpetually maintain the mutual relation.

The office of a chaplain is, according to Mr. Collier, to pray for, bless, and give absolution to those he is concerned for—"All which says he, are acts of authority and jurisdiction." If this last assertion be true, it is enough to destroy all charity; since at this rate of reasoning, I ought to be afraid of throwing a farthing to an alms-woman, lest she should be thereby provoked to pray for and bless me, and by that means acquire jurisdiction over me. And who would not rather deny his charity than give away his liberty?

To shew that Mr. Collier is very much in earnest in bestowing this same authority upon this his domestic parson, he puts a rod in his hand against the master of the family himself, whom, it seems, it is his right to counsel, exhort and reprove; which offices, he says, are "inconsistent with the condition of a servant." The chaplain therefore is, in the first place, a much wiser man, as well as a more holy, than my lord is; and in the second place, it is his duty to owe my lord no duty at all in the capacity of a servant to a superiour.

After he has put the clergy in "joint commission with the angels themselves," as he says God has done; it is no wonder that he will not allow the meanest of them to be any man's servant, how great soever. He therefore reasons against the 13th of Henry VIII. because it calls the patrons of chaplains their masters. If some of them "formerly were stewards and clerks of the kitchen to people of distinction," as he says bishop Latimer complains some of them were forced to be in his time; I cannot see for all that how they could, according to Mr. Collier, suffer by it in their dignity and reputations; because, for as good reasons as before, their gathering the rent and going to market for provision, might give them jurisdiction over the person who employed them. I cannot therefore join with some of the criticks in censuring the author of the scornful lady, for dispatching parson Roger in a morning, with his basket under his arm, to scour the roosts and gather eggs; the same being a primitive branch of his office, if we may believe the aforesaid bishop.

But though "people misapprehending the priest's office, entertain a chaplain upon the same account they do their footmen, only to garnish the table and stuff out the figure of the family;" (Collier's Essays, Part 1. p. 204, 205.) yet "for a patron to account such a consecrated person his priest, as if he belonged to him as a servant, is, in effect, to challenge divine honours, and to set himself up for a God," (p. 207.) Mr. Leslie puts the same thing stronger, in fewer words, and will not suffer any man (prince or subject) to say, my parson, or my chaplain, in any other sense than we say, my king, or my God.

So that, in the sentiments of these reverend gentlemen, every one who hires a chaplain, hires a master. Take warning then, O ye rich men, nobles, and princes of the earth; and due submission and allegiance pay unto these your spiritual sovereigns, whom you have taken into your service to be your superiours; and to whom you give bread and wages to exercise dominion over you.

After all, Mr. Collier is so good as to allow "the master of the family in the absence of the priest, to supply his place, as far as lawfully he may, that is, in praying and giving thanks at meat," (p. 200.) But he must not pray to God to bless his family, and to forgive them their sins; for this would be to usurp the authority of his lord, the chaplain.

Before I have done with Mr. Collier, I would ask him one question, and that is, whether the chaplains of bishops are of the same superiour importance and authority with the chaplains of laymen; because the bishops themselves are qualified to be their own chaplains; if the saying of domestick prayers, and blessing their own table, is allowed by him to be consistent with their ecclesiastical dignity?

Milton, though otherwise a man of great parts and merit, yet wanting either the sense or the grace to see the usefulness and excellency of these adopted sovereigns, speaks of them with too much contempt. He says, that "in state perhaps they may be listed among the upper serving men of some great household, and be admitted to some such place as may stile them the sewers or the yeomen ushers of devotion, where the master is too resty, or too rich, to say his own prayers, or to bless his own table." (Vol. 2. of his Works in folio, p. 509.)

But this was the case only in his time, for a chaplain now-a-days is looked upon as a more honourable piece of furniture. After a coach

and six, the next trappings of domestick grandeur, are a page, plate, and a parson. He swells the household pomp and luxury, and is often taken for pride more than prayers. Formerly, his appetite was uncourteously restrained ; he was only permitted to riot in roast beef ; and sir Scrape and the first-course were removed together. But now he has better luck, having, for the most part, obtained a general toleration for custard.

Nor are the times mended with Mr. Chaplain in one instance only : In days of yore he was humbly content with Abigail, and my lady's woman was thought a suitable match for the household priest, (as Mr. Collier christens him) but now he does not make that use of her, but leaves her, and flies at higher game. If my lady be single, the doctor has a chance for making his fortune ; and when he cannot marry her, he can sometimes sell her : of which I could give instances, but for the regard which I bear to the quality and the priesthood. If my lady be already married, he has still happiness and good fortune in his eye, provided she be but young ; and even though she be old, provided she be superstitious and bigoted : so that whether her person be agreeable, or her understanding crazy, he has his ends ; for he has a parson's barn, and nothing comes amiss.

It must be owned farther, that a chaplain in a great family is a useful body for most purposes, except that of his function : he is of a facetious person, and his jokes and puns keep the upper part of the family in a good mood ; for, as to the inferiour, he deigns not to speak to them, unless to insult them, and thereby teach them the great respect which they owe him. He moreover graciously condescends to pry into all the actions and behaviour of the servants, by which he keeps them in obedience and fear, at least of himself.

Scire volunt secreta domus, atque inde timeri.

Besides, he is so courteous, that he meddles with all family-affairs, unasked ; and interposes with his counsel and authority, unthanked. From hence it comes, that he and the steward can never agree : for the steward (like a sauny layman, as he is) will be pretending to know his own business as well as Mr. Chaplain, who is a consecrated person. The family is therefore eternally divided into two factions between them ; but the doctor has the secret of securing the women on his side, and so always gets the better.

The doctor is likewise a considerable person for divers other arts and accomplishments. He throws a bowl with more skill, and follows it with more activity, than any man (not in orders) upon the green. He is also a trusty toper in the family : he has an uncommon palate in the discernment of liquors, and an uncommon zeal for their consumption. Nor is his great dexterity at whisk of trivial moment : his talent in this branch of his duty is so signal, that my lady seldom fails chusing, or rather requiring him for her own partner, if he be not already snapped up by the daughter for hers.

After all this, who can wonder that our household-priest holds up his head, and adores himself ? He is an hourly witness of his own importance and figure ; and finding himself an extraordinary body. it is nothing strange that he demands extraordinary treatment. As little to

be admired is the erectness of his mien, and the dignified primness of his manner; how else should he be himself, and differ from all other men? His authority and the custom of the cloth give him a right to contradiction; and if he love state and courtly pomp, what layman does not? If he hate to see a brother peeping through timber, or wriggling in a string, who can blame the workings of self-love? If the German princes are under his displeasure for sacrilegiously admitting their pages to say grace; so are all they who make bold to cut their own combs, under the frowns of that famous artist Don Saltero of Chelsea.

To conclude with a grave paragraph; I am afraid it too often happens, that this same household-priest, who is taken into a family to sanctify it, proves a disturber of its repose, and a foe to its welfare. He is a spy upon the wealthy and the great, for the ill ends of his order. If he has the ear of his patron, he can, by alarming his conscience, or stroking his vanity, influence him to turn the patrimony of his children into a gift of the altar; and so a family of innocents are straitened, or ruined, to enlarge the pride and income of a worthless vicar, or to rear up a graceless mob, for the interest and support of priest-craft and slavery. So that the publick itself suffers in no small degree from the malignant influence which designing chaplains have in great houses. How many noble families are by them inflamed with an unsocial bitterness of spirit against all those, who inoffensively think for themselves; and are tainted with the vile principles of vassalage to any authority, civil or sacred, which these their spiritual governours shall plead for?

P.S. This paper being intended to expose the ridiculous privileges claimed in behalf of chaplains, as if they were of divine institution; and the ill use which they make of their influence over weak minds; nothing here said is meant against any gentleman's taking into his family a pious and agreeable clergyman, under the title of a chaplain; who, if he possesses an honest and beneficent heart, with affability and good-breeding, is, no doubt, an amiable character. But as to those little, sour, unbred bigots, whom I have frequently seen in that station, I do not think that they ought to be admitted into the conversation of gentlemen, or suffered to have any concern either with their children or servants.

(r.

NUMBER 21.

A comparison between the high-church and the Quakers.

THE clergy of our national church are spiritual officers appointed by order of the civil magistrate (like church-wardens, overseers of the poor, constables and other parish-officers) to act according to his law, which is their rule, and which has interpreted the bible for them in the thirty-nine articles, homilies, liturgy, canons, injunctions, and other institutions. The chief design of their appointment is to instruct men in religion and morality, or to make men wiser and better than they

would be without their assistance. To that end they are hired, and paid a great revenue, which, by the means of lands, tythes, rents, salaries, fees, and perquisites, is supposed to amount to two millions per annum ; wherein they greatly differ from the aforesaid parish-officers, who perform many real services to society without any particular reward, as is, in many cases, the certain duty, which men of the same society owe to one another. But as making men wise and good are the very best things which can be done for them, both in relation to their condition in this world and the next ; so every man ought to think this revenue well bestowed, if men are made more wise and good in any proportion to the charge ; and on the other side ill bestowed, if men are not in the least improved in knowledge and virtue ; much more, if they are rendered more ignorant and worse by the teaching and influence of their guides.

We are justly concerned how we part with our money in other cases, how it is laid out and managed and whether what we receive in lieu of it be worth our money, especially when the sum is considerable. It is therefore of great importance to us to consider the state of this affair, wherein so much is expended ; that, in case the clergy do not answer the ends of their calling, and not deserve their revenues, we may take proper measures to make them do so : for it is in the power of us of the laity, who almost wholly choose and constitute the legislature, to make the clergy useful ; and it is either through our ignorance, or knavery, or both, if we do not make them useful.

Now it seems to me, that the toleration of liberty of conscience granted by law in England, gives us an opportunity of examining this matter, beyond what can be done in popish or other countries, where no such toleration is allowed. We have a numerous sect, or people among us, distinguished by the name of quakers, who have no spiritual officers, with any wages, hire, or salary, whose peculiar business it is to teach ; but every man among them does freely of himself, and gratis, communicate his knowledge, both publickly and privately, according to his ability, whenever he judges it proper so to do : and therefore we may easily make a comparison in the case, between the wisdom and virtue of the common people of the national church, and the wisdom and virtue of the quakers, (who have no quality or gentry among them, but consist of tradesmen, artificers, farmers, servants, and labourers) and thereby make a just judgment, whether the two millions per annum are well or ill bestowed.

No man will deny, that the quakers are born with the same natural parts as the churchmen. It will also be manifest, that they improve their natural parts by the knowledge of what the clergy esteem the most important and sublime points of religion, under their general, diffused, unhired ministry ; equally at least with the members of the church, under the direction of their clergy, hired for wages : for by free conversation with both sorts, you will find that the quakers understand as well the nature and attributes of God, the doctrines of the trinity in unity, the satisfaction, the incarnation of God, and other such points, and express themselves as clearly about them as churchmen ; and I presume that this matter will appear so clear, as not to admit of the least doubt. I do confess, that the quakers have some errors, (for

what man is or can be free from error?) But as to those errors, I think two things may be offered in excuse of them.

First, I observe in general with the most ingenious and reverend Mr. Norris, (in his two treatises of divine light, tract 2. p. 32.) who says, that he cannot think quakerism inconsiderable, as the principles of it are laid down and managed by Mr. Barclay. That great and general contempt they lie under, does not hinder him from thinking the sect of the quakers to be far the most considerable of any that divide from the church, in case the quakerism that is generally held be the same with that which Mr. Barclay has delivered to the world for such ; whom he takes to be so great a man, that he professes freely that he had rather engage against an hundred Bellarmins, Hardings and Stopletons, than with one Barclay.

Secondly, I observe, that the quakers seem very excusable in respect to several of the errors wherewith they are charged ; and that their neighbours, if they would do as they desire to be done unto, may justly pardon them. For, as to their opinions about tithes, and paying wages to clergy, (which are deemed fundamental errors, and judged by the clergy in their books against the quakers to be a sort of atheism) they have it to say in their excuse, that tithes, which were a part of the ritual law of the jews, are, as such, abolished under the gospel, which has repealed the whole ritual law. It seems also strange to them, that ambassadors, (as the clergy pretend to be) or negotiators, should claim money from those to whom they are sent ; that it appears more strange that the clergy, who pretend to be successors in ambassadorship to Christ and his apostles, should claim tithes or money, and thereby suppose our blessed Saviour himself and his apostles to have begun that claim : Therefore they alledge, that if the clergy are only voluntary ambassadors or negotiators, they ought to bear their own charges ; and if only ministers or servants, they should be paid their wages by those who hire them, and not claim an independent maintenance ; and herein they pretend to follow the primitive Christians, who (according to the reverend and learned Dr. Reeves, in his apologies, &c. Vol. 1. p. 44.) would not pay taxes for the maintenance of the heathen temples. And indeed, there is no colour to make tithes due *jure divino*, that point being fully determined on the side of the quakers, by that accomplished scholar and divine, Dr. Prideaux, in his original and right of tithes ; and besides, it is a matter of contest among the clergy, to which sort of them an independent maintenance does by divine right belong.

As to the quakers doctrines of passive obedience, or taking patiently all manner of affronts and injuries, and refusing to bear arms on any occasion ; it is known, that herein they follow St. Justin Martyr, Origen, Tertullian, St. Cyprian, Lactantius, St. Basil, Salvian, and others the most learned and ancient of the primitive fathers.

And as to their principle of not swearing at all, they follow the fathers of the five first centuries, who (according to the most learned Dr. Whitby, in Dissert. de Script. Interp. p. 164.) all agreed, that oaths of all kinds were unlawful to Christians ; those fathers understanding our Saviour's words, swear not at all, universally ; which, indeed, seem suited to the notion, as they were the very language of the essenes, a

sect of jews in our Saviour's time, who maintained all oaths to be unlawful.

It will be difficult to find one quaker that cannot read, unless he has been educated and bread up in the church, and became a convert to quakerism. Whereas, I will venture to affirm, that half the common people of the church, especially in the country, cannot read a word.

The quakers are great readers of the Bible ; and it is their principle to endeavour to make the best of that divine book ; which, though containing infinite treasures of wisdom and knowledge, yet, as it is a perfect rule of faith to the whole world, is a plain and most intelligible book, and must naturally improve the quakers, more than it does those churchmen, who either cannot read, or do not read the bible at all, or not so much as the quakers ; or that think they are not to make the best of their bibles without any restraint. I dare to be so unfashionable as to assert, that the bible may, and will, improve the readers thereof ; notwithstanding Dr. South says of a part of that holy book, that it either finds men mad, or makes them so ; and that Dr. Reeves, in derogation of its divine precepts, thinks fit to suppose, that quakers, by reading the bible, become stark bible-mad. (Preface to apologies, &c. p. 11.)

But there is one point wherein the quakers greatly exceed the churchmen in understanding, and whereof the meanest among them is firmly persuaded ; and that is, that every man is to judge for himself in matters of religion. Whereas few churchmen are clear, as men, Christians, and protestants, ought to be, in this matter ; which is the foundation of all good sense, Christianity, and our glorious reformation from the worst priestcraft, popery. This principle naturally produces knowledge ; for the use of the understanding improves the faculty ; as delivering up the understanding to priests or guides, sinks and debases it. And accordingly the quakers reason and act very nicely in their affairs, as a politick body, in relation to marriage, orphans, care of their poor, &c. and particulars among them understand trade, and the business of the world, and how to live in it, as well as any men whatsoever.

As to the comparison, which are the best men, quakers or churchmen ; I suppose, it will not be denied, but that the quakers are as good men ; as good in their families ; as good neighbours ; as quiet, temperate, chaste, sober, free from passion, industrious ; as clear from the gross crimes which fill the goals, and expose men to the pillory and hanging ; as charitable in their sentiments to those who differ from them ; as great enemies to persecution ; as true to liberty and property, as any churchmen ; and, in fine, as good subjects, and as loyal to king George, (though loyalty be the distinguishing principle and glory of our church,) as any professed follower of Dr. Sacheverel, Luke Milbourne, or other swearing loyal divine.

Since, therefore, it is undeniably evident, that the quakers are at least as wise and as good, without any charge to the publick, as churchmen are with it ; I conceive that it is incumbent on every one, who does not envy the clergy their preferments, to endeavour to find out some other way to make them as useful as possible to mankind, and to put them upon such an establishment as may enable them to deserve all their power and riches ; which shall be the subject of some future papers.

C.

NUMBER 22.

Priestcraft corrupts every thing, and perverts the use of Words.

POETS tells us, that Midas changed every thing which he touched into gold, and Medusa's head every one who saw it into stone; but priestcraft is yet of a more mischievous nature, for that converts all who come within its influence into idiots or lunatics; and every virtue or good quality of the mind into nonsense or roguery.

Every creature and plant assimilate the food or nourishment which they receive, into their own substance: The toad converts into poison the same juices, of which the bee makes honey: The same breath blown into different instruments, makes good or harsh musick; it is no wonder therefore if that which is all corruption itself, should corrupt and spoil every thing else which touches or comes near it.

It has so mangled and perverted the signification of words, and the nature of things, that language is rendered useless, or rather a snare to mankind: There is scarce a sound or an action, which has received the stamp of a general approbation, that has not lost its meaning; and is stript of all honesty to become orthodox, and be made free of the sacred society, as the popish priests are pleased to call themselves.

A becoming zeal for the glory of God, which ought to be a fervent disposition of mind to promote holiness and virtue amongst men, by softness, persuasion, and example, is now nothing but party-rage, an implacable and furious hatred, and the denunciation of woe and mortal war against all, who do not believe just the same with us, and cut their combs as we do: moderation is become a vice, and esteemed to be lukewarmness, and an indifference to religion and goodness.

An obstinate bent of mind, and a determinate resolution to adhere to opinions, the truth of which we have never examined, never intend to examine, and for the most part, are not able to understand if we did, is what is called constancy in the faith; and to burn ourselves or to fight with our best friends till we can burn them, passes for heroick and Christian courage.

We must shut out the sun at noon in a summer's day, to make use of candle-light; and give up all our senses to submit to frail authority. We are to believe every thing in exact proportion as we cannot understand it, or as it appears absurd; and allow that alone to be true faith, which contradicts the first principles of science. Reason, the only light which God has given to men, to distinguish truth from falsehood, virtue from vice, religion from imposture, is decried; and the use of it deemed impious and dangerous.

Persecution of our fellow creatures, fellow subjects and fellow Christians, for doing the best action which they are capable of doing, (that is, worshipping God in the manner which they think to be most acceptable to him) is called serving the Almighty, and promoting his religion. The ruining and destroying our neighbours, (whom we are command-

ed to love as ourselves) and cutting their throats, is having pity upon their poor souls; and the acting against the dictates of nature, and precepts of the gospel, is Christianity, and doing the will of our Saviour.

Enthusiasts, fanatical, melancholy, monkish, recluse and sequestered persons, are esteemed the religious; and are supposed to know the other world, in proportion as they know little of this. Philosophers, and men of wit or sound knowledge, are generally accused of infidelity and atheism; nay, the cardinal virtues themselves cannot escape; but without the belief of certain fashionable speculations, are accounted only splendida peccata, and those who possess them are treated with ignominy; and indeed, none are thought fit for heaven by gentlemen of this cast, but such as no man of common sense would care to keep company with upon earth.

Celibacy is esteemed a virtue in some churches, and not discouraged in others; and the disobeying the great dictates of nature, and the positive command of God, to increase and multiply, is miscalled chastity; and the wasting our time in running up and down from church to chapel, from chapel to church, to hear masses, and idle harrangues, and being perfectly useless to society, and good for no one thing in the world, is called by the popish priests devotion and godliness; as if the Almighty could be any way served but by doing good to his creatures.

Poorness and dejection of mind, is called meekness of spirit; and a readiness to submit to injuries and impositions, is Christian humility; stifling our senses, is submission and deference to authority; and our best searches, and most sincere enquiries after truth, are called the desires of novelty, and curious and forbidden studies: The doubting of any thing, which our guides think it their interest to tell us, or shewing the weakness of their arguments, is scepticism, and renouncing the faith; and a hearty concern for the honour of Almighty God, and the good of men, is often interpreted to be downright atheism; and to communicate with our Christian brethren, when we can do it with a good conscience, is hypocrisy; unless we do it too when we think it sinful.

An attempt to oblige the clergy to keep the laws which they have sworn to, and the articles which they have subscribed, is to oppose received opinions, and to disturb points already settled. An endeavour to preserve our legal constitution, is sedition, faction, and being given to change; and a generous love for all mankind, and the liberty of our country, with a noble resolution to venture life, and all which is valuable here below for that glorious cause, is rebellion, and worse than the sin of witchcraft.

Wasting, macerating, and torturing our bodies by fasting and penances, is sanctifying our souls; and to reject and throw back the benevolence and bountiful gifts of indulgent Providence, is to shew and pay our grateful acknowledgments to his goodness; as if he gave us any thing not to use and enjoy it; but we were to accept these blessings only in trust for the clergy, and so live poorly ourselves, that they may riot in luxury, profuseness and pride; which they have seldom failed to do, when they have had the means of doing it; carnal things being observed best to suit with spiritual minds.

Playing monkey tricks at church, passes among the papists for the worship of God; and they go to ghostly dancing-masters, to know how

to accost him fashionably ; the failing in a ceremony, the omission of a bow ; the not filing to the right or left readily, or not adjusting their motions to the tune and time of the organs ; are all dangerous errors, and savour much of heresy ; and the worshipping God in spirit and in truth only, is disobedience to the church, and little better, if not worse than atheism ; the decking up, and dressing of churches, and giving the Deity fine clothes, is decency, and doing him honour.

Consecration, which is the appointment or appropriation of places, persons, or inanimate things, to be used only in the immediate service of God, (and which may be so applied indifferently with any ceremony, or with none at all) is turned by the Romish priests into a sort of incantation or spiritual juggling. By virtue of a little holy water, looking towards the east, mumbling over a few cunning words, certain motions of the hand and head, and by the force of grimace and mummerly the said places, persons, and things become sacred, and the holiness is transferred from the minds of the communicants to the ground, the wainscoat, and the carcass and clothes of the priest ; and so the devotion due to Almighty God, is changed into a senseless idolatry to as senseless men and idols.

Prayers are turned by them into curses, and sermons into invectives and libels ; benevolence and good-will towards men, and even charity itself, which is comprehensive of all the virtues, and without which faith and hope signify nothing, and which is not confined to persons, nations, or languages, to sects nor opinions, but ought to be as free as the elements, and diffusive as the animal creation, is changed into faction, partiality, and often profuseness, to support a party, and a combination against all mankind, who do not think and act as we do.

But no parts of speech have had so ill fortune, as Scripture language, and even amongst some protestants ; appellatives, and the names of complex ideas, are often left untranslated, that they may pass for real beings, and signify whatever the priests have occasion for ; and sometimes, where they have been translated, false or unfair meanings have been assigned to them, and they have been made to convey a quite different sense from what they import in scripture. The word ecclesia or assembly is translated church, which there always signifies the Christian people, and in our articles, is defined to be the congregation of the faithful, but is now generally used only for the clergy : and the word episcopos (which in English is overseer) is englished bishop ; so that women, and the ignorant croud, are fully satisfied that they have found in scripture, a lord of Parliament, and a diocesan prelate, with a mitre upon his head, and a crosier in his hand ; and whenever they hear or read the word presbyter, they fancy they see a parson beating his cushion in a pulpit, and believe him to be jure divino ; instances of this kind are endless.

Even literature itself is perverted, and instead of being made to improve men's natural faculties, is used to extinguish or stifle the first principles of knowledge. Seminaries have been erected and endowed to teach men backward. The youth at a very great expense, learn to be blockheads, and accomplished dunces ; and spend the first and most improvable part of their manhood to be finished in folly. The discovery of printing, which brought about the reformation, is used to de-

stroy it ; and like the Scotchman's monkey, is made to bite every one but him who has the sole custody of the machine.

Of all or most of these heads, I shall treat separately, in order to undeceive mankind, and to manumit them from the frauds and tyranny of popish and popishly-affected clergymen ; by shewing that they now do, and ever did, make use of all their influence over the stupid and unhappy laity, and of all the power and riches which they have been ever trusted with, to drive religion and virtue from the face of the earth, and therefore have always endeavoured to turn the worst things into the best, and the best into the worst.

One drop of priest-craft is enough to contaminate the ocean.

T.

NUMBER 23.

Of Zeal.

I do not know any word, in any language, which, next to the word church, has so much wickedness and roguery to answer for, as the word zeal. It is indeed an important and dreadful monosyllable, which, when used with proper gestures and emphasis, can turn a cut throat into a saint, and a mad man into a martyr. It can commit bloodshed and butchery, with innocent hands ; destroy life and property with a good conscience ; and dispeople nations with applause.

True zeal is a sincere and warm concern for the glory of God, and the spiritual welfare of mankind. This definition seems to me to take in every idea which ought to be annexed to the word zeal ; and shews it to be a virtue full of affection, meekness, humanity and benevolence, and void of all choler, bitterness, ill-will, and severity. This is its character ; and whatever contradicts it, is not zeal, but rage.

Especial care ought therefore to be taken, effectually to distinguish true zeal from false, and the thing from the pretence of it. For if it be not well grounded, it falls under the apostle's censure of a zeal, which is not according to knowledge. Of the latter sort, is that with which crafty men intatuate the credulous multitude, who take their religion upon trust, and their faith and zeal at second hand. Their godliness consists in prejudices and a set of names. They hate dissenters, because they do not come to church, and because they are strict observers of the Lord's day, and seek God without book. And they are zealous for the church ; but if you ask them what they mean by it, you will find it to be either the organs, the ring of bells, or the parson. They have a zealous antipathy to a black cloak, which is a certain sign of a wrong religion ; and they have a doating fondness for a black gown, which is an infallible mark of the true church. They therefore abhor and insult the former, and honour and bow down to the latter. This temper and behaviour in them are wonderful demonstra-

tions of the spirit of the gospel ; and entitle them to the highest favour and approbation of their spiritual governours. At the time when Dr. Sacheverel was suffering the law for sedition, I asked one of his mob, who was straggling at some distance from the rest, in Lincoln's-inn-fields, (as they were proceeding to demolish Daniel Burgess' meeting-house) what provoked him to so much outrage against Daniel and his congregation ? He answered ; because they had murdered king Charles the first. I then asked him what he knew concerning king Charles the first ? Why, quoth he, he was one of the twelve apostles ; and Dr. Sacheverel is the best friend he has in the world. Here he swore a great oath, and left me to pity the ignorance and phrenzy of the enchanted croud.

Ignorance is the mother of this sort of zeal, and craft its father : and as its pedigree is vile, so is its behaviour brutal and abominable. It is the tool of knavery and design, and operates by folly, wickedness and force. It is a mastiff uncoupled, and hallooed at conscience, sobriety and peace ; and set on to devour every good quality, itself possessing none. It is roused by lies, and animated by liquor. It combats truth with curses, and moderation with blows. Its courage is madness, and it is bold through blindness. It has never any mercy upon others, and seldom upon itself. It takes the word of its driver ; and mistakes mischief for merit, and his word for God's. It is the most miserable of all slaves ; it is blind, and it is distracted ; and its only freedom is to act outrages, and shed blood. It is neither blessed with enjoyment nor rest. It boils with anger ; it burns with envy ; it is tortured with hatred ; it is hurried headlong by all the worst passions. It is incapable of happiness ; and either deaf to instruction, or undone by it ; for the moment it grows wiser, it dies.

How often do ambition and design work their own impious ends, under the plausible disguise of sanctified zeal ! Men are never weary of being deluded with sounds ; and a pious word, artfully prostituted, and devoutly pronounced, will at any time lure them into the grossest impostures, and push them on to commit the most inhuman barbarities. Thus the papists are first taught that the pope is a vice-god, and the representative of Jesus Christ ; and that his zeal for his own revenues and dominions, is zeal for Christ and his church ; and then it is an easy matter to persuade these poor slaves and bubbles, to adopt such a portion of the same zeal, as will prompt them to poison, and murder, and plunder, and burn, all those unhappy schismatics, who continue so, rather than abandon their senses, their humanity, their charity, and the fear of God ; all which are destructive of the character of a zealot. And thus both papists and protestants, being persuaded by their priests, that all who, either through reason or grace, think differently from the said priests, are in a state of damnation ; become further persuaded, that because they are to be damned, therefore, they are to be undone ; and so anticipate the labour of the devils, and add misery to the miserable. By this means as satan is the Almighty's executioner, they make themselves satan's ; and such zeal is at once the instrument and qualification of a demon.

When I see a grave doctor proudly urging upon his hearers the divine right of episcopacy, which is just of as much importance to mankind as the divine right of geography ; I see presently into the heart

of the the man, and would lay any wager that he has a burning zeal to succeed St. Peter, in the divine revenue and lordship of some human diocese ; or else courts some bishop with great zeal for his lordship's niece, or for a fat benefice. And I cannot but own, that a Christian zeal for a thousand pounds a year, or even for two hundred pounds a year, or even for a rich wife, gifted with a good apostolick fortune, is a very commendable and very prevailing sort of zeal ; but I cannot see that it equally affects the whole congregation. Pray of what moment is it to a harmless, well-meaning flock of sheep, whether their shepherd be called pastor or overseer ? Or, whether he have twenty pounds a year wages, or twenty times as much ? Or whether he be hired by the whole village, or only the chief man of the village ? Or, whether he wear a plain hat, or a high crowned cap ? Or, whether he wear linen or woollen ? But it is of great moment to them, whether he feed them or starve them ; or whether he defend or plunder them ; or whether he utterly neglect them himself, or only leave them to the care and command of his dog ; or whether he seek their safety and happiness, or only their flesh and their fleeces.

But further ; the tempers of men, being either naturally warm, or quickly made so, it is easy to mistake a hot head for a devout heart, and an angry heart for a devout zeal. But, alas, how different is the meek spirit of the gospel, from that fury which is raised by strong beer, or passionate sermons ! How little do men consider, that the same arteries do often beat with the same vigour for a punk as for the church, and occasion broken heads for the one as soon as for the other !

True Christian divine zeal is inspired by God Almighty, and comes attended with every other Christian virtue, and subdues every unruly passion. It is inseparable from charity, the highest Christian grace, and the chief characteristick of a Christian ; that charity which wisheth all things, hopeth all things ; which forgives all men, but hurts none. It neither burns nor imprisons mens bodies ; nor plunders their goods, nor fails at their persons, nor stirs up mischief against them, nor marks them out for damnation. It is not raised by cruel language, nor increased by bottles of brandy ; it is modest, it is merciful, it is temperate, it is discerning.

On the other hand, there is not in the world a more cruel, debauched, or more ignorant passion, than false zeal. It is void of pity, of grace, of knowledge, and of charity ; it is outrageous ; it delights in blood ; it commits massacres, and murders innocents ; it dispeoples nations. Nothing can restrain it, neither kindred nor good qualities, nor pity nor tears. It usurps the name of religion, and destroys all religion ; it commits abomination in a style of devotion, and talks blasphemy in the name of the Lord. It prostitutes God's authority to destroy God's works ; and, in the name of Christ, damns and destroys those whom Christ died to save.

If people would but look a little into their own hearts and constitutions, they would too often find that their zeal is only anger, and that this hot devotion resides altogether in the blood. I have long observed that your cholerick fellows are your most zealous fellows, and are always the warmest churchmen ; and that, amongst the ladies, the most amorous are ever the greatest bigots. He who is peevish at his table, will be peevish in his pulpit ; and as highly offended at an ill

dinner, as at a conventicle. I once caught a great fat doctor at St. Paul's cursing and storming against Presbyterians, whom he consigned in a body over to Satan, with great zeal, and no remorse. Says I, to myself, this reverend ill-tongued parson will certainly quarrel, and kick, over his claret as well as over his cushion. In order to try, I got into his company at the Baptist's head, and by the humility of my behaviour, and the divinity of the hermitage, I sat at tolerable ease with the doctor, till the middle of the third bottle, and then he swore at the drawer for not answering before he was called; and, before it was out, he drank confusion to fanaticks, and a health to sorrel. The doctor then shewed a violent appetite for quarrelling; but meeting nobody in the same humour, he only eased himself in oaths; till an honest citizen drank to him the glorious memory of king William; which the doctor pledged by throwing a wild duck just hot from the spit, full in the citizen's face, and got up at the same time to fall upon him with his hands; but as soon as he got up he fell, and we left him upon the floor, to the care of the drawers.

How long are mankind to be deluded with sounds; and how long will uncharitableness and outrage, which are enemies to the nature of Christianity, pass for zeal, for religion! Are men to be cursed, or punished, or destroyed, out of zeal for the gospel, by which all severity is forbid? Where are we commanded to quarrel for the peace of the church; or to run mad for the reasonableness of liturgies? Or to fight for the divine original of human forms? Or to deliver men to the devil, for the saving of their souls?

How unlike is our modern zeal to that of the apostles, and how unworthy to be called by that name! They lived under hardships and stripes, and ventured their lives to convert unbelievers: Our present zealots live at ease and in plenty; and their zeal is devoutly employed about tythes, honours, garments, and forms. They do not pretend to venture their livings and their lives to convert either pagan, or papist, or Mahometan. The idolatry and infidelity under which the miserable world lies, do not seem to interrupt their quiet and their enjoyments. But if a dozen harmless Christians presume to worship God in a barn; or to pray to God without book; or to commemorate Christ's death with praises and prayers, such as a devout heart dictates; or to refuse complying with a rote of words, which they judge neither edifying nor warrantable; or to follow their consciences, which alone can justify them in the sight of God; and not the authority of men, which cannot justify them in the sight of God; they are alarmed; and their church-rotters, if conscience be protected.

If this be the spirit of Christianity, I must own myself to have been hitherto a stranger to Christianity; and yet these men go on to tell us, that they are the only true church, though they possess not one grain of that charity which distinguishes a Christian from a reprobate, as much as a rational soul does a man from a monkey; and to damn all other churches, that is, the whole world, without taking one step towards bringing them into a state of salvation. G.

NUMBER 24.

Of Persecution.

THERE are but two ways of propagating religion, namely, miracles and exhortation. The one depends upon divine power, and the other upon the strength of reason. Where the finger of God appears, all further testimony is needless; and where the truth is obvious to reason, miracles are needless. God never wills us to believe that which is above our reason, but he at the same time commands our faith by miracles. He does not leave necessary things doubtful; and for this reason alone it is, that men are said to be left without excuse.

Every point of belief therefore must be supported either by reason or miracle, or else it is no point of belief at all. Both the Jewish and the Christian law were delivered and enforced with manifest signs and demonstrations of God's extraordinary presence and power. And it has been very justly boasted of the Christian religion in particular, that it spread and prospered by miracles, persuasion, and clemency, in opposition to violence and cruelty.

But when Christianity became tainted and defaced by priest-craft, it grew necessary to have many points believed, which contradicted both revelation and common sense: Therefore its foster fathers, who to the worship of God, added the worship of themselves, had no other way to prove their system but by wrath and vengeance. Reason was against them, and miracles not for them; so their whole dominion stood upon falsehood, guarded by force. This force, when it is exercised upon a religious account, is called persecution; which is what I am now to consider and expose.

To punish men for opinions that are even plainly false and absurd, is barbarous and unreasonable. We possess different minds, as we do different bodies; and the same proposition carries not the same evidence to every man alike, no more than the same object appears equally clear to every eye. A cholerick temper, when it is not corrected with reason, and seasoned with humanity, is naturally zealous. A phlegmatick temper, on the other side, as it is naturally slow, so is it naturally warm and indifferent. Is there any merit in having a warm complexion, or any sin in being dull?

But further; to punish a man for not seeing the truth, or for not embracing it, is in the first place, to make him miserable, because he is already so; and in the second place, to pluck vengeance out of God's hands, to whom alone it belongs, if we will take his word for it. If this severity is pretended to be for his good, I would ask, is manifest cruelty any token of kindness, or was it ever taken for such? Does it not always increase the evil which it is employed to cure? Is destruction the means to happiness? Absurd and terrible!

But what, if, after all, the person persecuted should be found adherent to truth and honesty, and his enemies, should prove their enemies? Would not this be adding cruelty to falsehood, and heaping up guilt with both hands? This indeed is often the case. And where it is

not altogether so, the persecutors are still inexcusable. He who, in the search of truth, does all that he can, does as much as he ought. God requires no more, and what man dares do it, who fears him? When he acquits, who is it that condemns?

Besides, he that suffers, or at least dies, for religion, gives a testimony by so doing, that his conscience is dearer to him than ease or interest: Whereas the patrons of persecution have manifestly personal motives and self ends in it. It gratifies their pride, awes mankind, and brings them obedience and gain.

Our blessed Saviour, who had no view but the redemption of the world, never used his omnipotence, or the least force to subdue his enemies, though he knew their hearts to be malicious and implacable. He neither delivered them to death nor the devil, even for their hellish designs to kill him; much less for points of error or speculation. He reasoned with all men, but punished none. He used arguments, he worked wonders; but severities he neither practised nor recommended. His was a different spirit. He rebuked his apostles with sharpness, when, being yet full of the spirit of this world, and void of the spirit of God, they were for bringing down fire from heaven upon the heretical Samaritans. The merciful Jesus would not hurt these half heathens, though they rejected him in person, for he came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them: And they who take another method give the lye to the Lord of life, and disown him for their head.

His apostles, as soon as they had received the Holy Ghost, grew wiser and more merciful. They shewed by miracles, that they were endowed with the divine power, but they never used either to compel or to burn, though they were beset with false teachers, and opposed by gain-sayers. They were so far from giving ill-usage, that they never returned it. The exercise of wholesome severities was no part of their doctrine. Prayers and persuasions were their only arms, and such as became the gospel of peace.

This was the mild and heavenly behaviour of Christ and his apostles towards those who did not believe, or believed wrong; and it was followed by all their successors who aimed at the good of souls; but those who used the sacred function, as a ladder to power and gain, made a new gospel of their own decisions, and forced it upon the world, partly by fighting and partly by cursing. The apostles taught Christ, and their successors taught themselves. It was not enough to believe the doctrine of Christianity, but you must believe it in words of their inventing. To dispute their decrees, though they contradicted common sense and the spirit of God, was heresy; and heresy was damnation. And when, in consequence of this, they had allotted a pious Christian to eternal flames, for his infidelity in them, they dispatched him thither with all speed; because he was to be damned in the other world, therefore he was to be hanged or burned in this. A terrible gradation of cruelty! to be cursed, burned, and damned! But it was something natural; it began from persecuting priests, and ended in hell, and the devil was the last and highest executioner.

Thus they became prelates of both worlds, and proprietors of the punishments of both. Even where the civil sword was not at their command, their vengeance was as successfully, and in my opinion, more terribly executed without it, by the temporal effect of their ex-

communication. For the person under it was looked upon as a demon, and one in the power of the devil ; and so driven out, like a wild beast, from all the comforts of life, and human society ; to perish in a desert, by hunger, or the elements, or beasts of prey. And all this, perhaps, for denying a word or a phrase, which was never known in scripture, though impudently pretended to be fetched from thence.

Such dreadful dominion had they usurped over the bodies and souls of men, and so implacably did they exercise it ! And, to fill up the measure of their falsehood and cruelty, they blasphemously pretended to be serving God, when they were acting as if there were none.

Those who have set up for infallibility have found a good excuse, if it were true, for the insupportable tyranny, infinite murders, and wide devastations, which their religion has every where introduced. But those, who exact a blind obedience to decrees, which they own to be human, and annex penalties to positions, which we know to be false, and they know to be disputable ; and, in fine, act and dictate as if they were infallible, without pretending to be so ; are so utterly without all excuse, that I know no language which affords a name proper for their behaviour.

The Mahometan imposture was professedly to be spread by the sword. It had nothing else but that and libertinism to recommend it. But to propagate the Christian religion by terrour or arms is to deny it. It owns no such spirit. It rendered itself amiable, and gained ground by a principle of peace and love. These were the means instituted by Christ, for the recommendation and defence of his Gospel ; and they, who would choose contrary ones, charge him with folly, and have ends to serve very different from his. Ambition, pride, and revenge, may make good use of violence and persecution ; but they are the bane of Christianity, which always sinks when persecution rises. The vilest and most profligate men, are ever the promoters of it ; and the most virtuous are the greatest sufferers by it. Libertines stick at nothing ; but they who have the fear of God, cannot comply with all things.

Persecution is therefore the war of craft against conscience, and of impiety against truth. Reason, religion, and liberty, are its great foes ; but ignorance, tyranny, and atheism, its great seconds and support. We ought then constantly to oppose all claims of dominion in the clergy ; for they naturally end in cruelty. I believe it will be hard to shew, that ever the priesthood, at any time, or in any place, enjoyed the power of persecution without making use of it.

G.

NUMBER 25.

Of Consecration

HOLINESS is that character of purity, which originally and essentially appertains to God Almighty, (as a being utterly incapable of

stain and imperfection;) but is also ascribed, in a restrained and relative sense, to every act of devotion, and every person performing it. It is an active and rational thing; and where it is attributed to things inanimate or irrational, it is either merely in a figurative sense, or in no sense at all.

Thus when the elements in the sacraments are said to be holy, it is only meant only of the uses to which they are applied, and the purposes for which they are taken; for, though they were consecrated over and over again, yet, if they are never taken, or never devoutly taken, they have in themselves no more holiness than a common roll, or a cup of cold water.

And thus, when a people are said to be a holy people, it is meant of their sincere love of God, and conformity to his will, and of the actions by them performed in consequence of these good affections. But, if such actions, though seemingly devout, are superstitious or hypocritical; there is no more holiness in them, than in the Indians worshipping the devil, or in a boy's saying his prayers to avoid whipping.

And thus, when a house, or a piece of ground is said to be holy, it is understood only of some mark of holiness there shewn, either by the extraordinary presence of God, or by some act or acts of worship performed there to him. But when these marks of Omnipotence, and these acts of devotion cease, that ground is no more than common ground, and that house is a common house.

And thus, lastly, when the priests are called holy unto the Lord, it is meant only of their assisting at the solemn acts of adoration which are paid to him. At other times they are as other men; as is evident from their living after the manner of other men.

Holiness, therefore, consists only in a virtuous and pious disposition towards God, and is only shewn by the actions which it produces. But as superstition, especially when governed by craft, never fails to see, or to think that it sees effects and operations, which neither religion nor common sense can shew; hence men have been generally persuaded that places, buildings, utensils, and garments, did actually possess a real holiness: that stones and brickbats are blessed; and that timber, surplices and bells are exceeding godly bodies.

To help on this wretched and senseless credulity, the pagan and popish priests have gone so far as to compose farces of legerdemain, called by them offices of consecration? the whole end of which was, they pretended, to bestow godliness upon dead earth, and things inanimate. Thus they deceived the people in the name of the Lord, and gravely made speeches (which they called prayers) over wood, stones, and iron; by virtue of which, the said wood, stones and iron were obliged to become good orthodox lumber, and as sanctified bodies as the other members of the congregation.

If one was to demand of these reverend worthies, who required these things at their hands? I doubt it would prove a hard question; and probably the impertinent enquirer would be dispatched for satisfaction to satan, or the inquisition.—An effectual and orthodox answer to such busy unbelievers, and often practised with terrible success!

But as I live in a nation where such superstitions and cruelties are, I bless God, at an end; I take leave to be amazed at the assurance of those popish consecrators, who thus impiously pretend to draw down

an attribute of the Almighty, and endow with it what spot of earth they please. . . Will these insolent deceivers say, that God Almighty cannot hear as well and as favourable, a prayer put up from a ship as from a chapel ? Or in what part of scripture are we told that he will be rather worshiped at St. Peter's, than upon the Alps ; or at Loretto, or any other consecrated place, rather than in a booth, or a barn ; provided the worship be performed with equal piety ? Or does e'er a text in the New Testament inform us, that one piece of earth is holier than another ; or that any man or society of men can make it so ?

If consecrated ground have no more holiness in it than other ground, how is divine worship more acceptable in it than in other ground ? And if it have some uncommon sanctity in it ; let those concerned tell us what it is, how it is, and by what certain signs we shall know it ? And whether it keep all the said holiness to itself, and amongst its own inanimate heap of stones, timber, and nails ; and then what are we the better for it ? Or whether the religious bricks and mortar do in good earnest communicate part of their piety to the people ? And, if so ; in what manner do they perform this ; and how does it appear first, and operate afterwards ? But if all this be a mystery, let them shew us where it is revealed in scripture, wherein all other mysteries are revealed.

If by consecration any change be made, the same must be either visible, or only mystical. If the change be visible, then it comes under the test and examination of our senses, and must be evident to all men : but if the change be purely mystical, it must be revealed to all. So that we must either have the evidence of sense or the evidence of God's word and authority, which is as good. But where neither of these proofs appear, our faith and assent ought neither to be demanded ; nor given, if demanded.

If prayers be more prevailing with God, and divine service more welcome to him, when they come from consecrated ground ; then all worship and devotion ought to be performed only at church ; and family religion ought either to be neglected, (as lame and insufficient) or every private house should be consecrated ; and then every house would be a chapel, and every such chapel a church. I would be glad to know, why only one house in a parish should be consecrated, that is, made fit to pray in ; and why not every house, for the same reason ? For, nothing that helps devotion ought to be omitted, such omission being doubtless a great sin.

But if it be allowed that people may pray to as good purpose out of consecrated ground as in it ; how are prayers at church better than in a chamber or the fields ? Or, why should the prayers of five hundred have more need of consecrated ground, than the prayers of one, two, or three ? Or, if a place become holy by the devotions performed in it, then every place where devotions are performed, is as holy as another ; and if so, pray what use of a form of words, and a particular office for that purpose ?

Suppose a church to be consecrated, and yet never after used ; is it, for all this, holy ? Or, suppose that it has been used for all the purposes of a church, and yet was never formerly consecrated ; is it, for all that, not holy ?

Either the scripture is not a sufficient rule of worship, or this business of consecration in popish and pagan countries, is a needless, empty, superstitious foppery, an evident trick of priestcraft; as if the priests could change the nature of things, and confer the grace which they have not themselves upon stocks and stones, that have not, nor can have, the least moral goodness, or pravity, in them. A general of an army may as modestly and rationally contend, that the ground, on which his pavilion stands, is valiant ground; and that the ticking, of which it is made, is courageous ticking. And, according to the same way of reasoning, there is prodigious policy in the boards that compose the council-table; the carpet is a long-headed carpet, and the wainscot and chairs understand wonderfully well the interest of Christendom.

If devotion communicate a tincture of itself to wood and walls; the pravity of ill actions must, by the same rule, diffuse itself, and taint all the house or fields where such ill actions are committed. A jobb of lewdness must needs debauch the curtains greatly, and the bed-clothes must partake of the iniquity; and were justly punished by fire in Herefordshire for that reason: at which execution, I am told, a certain devout person now living, was a very zealous and useful assistant. Every counter and shop-board in the city must, for the like reason, be guilty of unpardonable tricking and lying; and for falsehood and dissimulation. Heaven have mercy upon some great buildings at the court-end of the town!

I would here be glad to know the precise extent of the influence which holiness and vice have upon the inanimate creation. Is a thick church-wall as quickly and fully impregnated with them as a thin one? And do they never extend an inch beyond the church and churchyard? Or, is the church equally holy, whether much devotion, or little, be performed in it? Or have the popish priests set bounds to the godliness of the ground, and the building; and said—'Thus far, or thus deep, O ground! shall thy holiness extend, and no farther.

If consecration signify any thing more than a declaration, that such a place is set aside for the worship of God, I wish it could be explained and proved; and the rather, because things of the most simple and obvious nature have, by the guile or superstition of designing church-men, been rendered to the credulous gaping multitudes, mysterious and tremendous; the natural enthusiasm which resides in the mind of man, having always made him the prey and property of delusion and deluders.

Happy, thrice happy, are we, who live in a country where all this pagan idolatry and these monkish fooleries receive no countenance from our laws; but, on the contrary, are forbid and punishable by them. The laity at the reformation had seen what use the priests made of this dark juggling, and of these hocus pocus tricks: and, therefore, would not suffer them to be played over again, to deceive superstitious and enchanted bigots, by making them pay great prices to be buried in consecrated ground, which rose, like the value of jewels, as they approached nearer to the bodies of saints, or the altar, where it seems the devil could not come at them; with many other advantageous frauds, which I shall hereafter expose to the world, when I treat again upon this prolifick subject.

G.

NUMBER 26.

Of Faith and Morality.

RELIGION, and virtue consist in doing good actions, or in a disposition to do them. These being in our power, as we perform or neglect them, we merit praise or blame. But in matters of speculation, or doubt, or such as are not necessarily attended with some consequences, it is of no moment on which side of the question we stand. Where there is no certainty, or significancy, there can be no duty. Faith without works, in scripture, has but a very indifferent character; it is said to be dead; and we all know that what is dead is useless.

If you would know any man's affections towards God, consult his behaviour towards men. Though his professions be ever so voluminous; though his zeal be ever so noisy; though he believe by the lump and swallow creeds by dozens; yet if he be immoral he is worse than an infidel. What is the use of belief, but to govern our practice, and beget good deeds? We all see the necessity of living well; but to believe well and do no more, is the same thing, with regard to others, as not to believe at all; and, with regard to ourselves, worse.

A worthy life infers worthy principles; but a base behaviour contradicts and dishonours an honest profession. Will any one tell me, that a virtuous heathen is not a better man, and more in the favour of God, than a profligate Christian? A pagan, who violates not the laws of truth and peace, is, in my eyes, an infinitely more religious person, than a turbulent and forsworn Christian Priest, though he wear a mitre.

Socrates, Plato, Cato, and Brutus were excellent persons, though they were only governed by the simple dictates of human reason, and were utter strangers to creeds and fathers, and our present orthodox notions established by law. Who, that has any care for his soul, any honour for his God, or any love for mankind, would not rather choose to be animated by the rational and beneficent sentiments of these righteous gentiles, than be possessed with the fierce and inhuman spirit of father Laud, friar Francis, or doctor Bungy, though they were all sound believers? I would have mentioned Aristotle here with the other ancients; but I find, that though he was very orthodox, and a great enemy to Dr. Clark's Arian principles*, yet this true believer was a very wicked liver. However, as a true friend to the church, he died the death of the righteous, and 'tis said enjoys everlasting life.†

Besides, saying is not proving. If we would be thought Christians, we ought to shew ourselves Christians. Living well is the best and on-

* Emanuel de Moura, and some other orthodox writers say, that Aristotle was a steady believer in the trinity.

† This is the opinion of Sepulveda, a learned man in the 16th century.

The whole article of Aristotle, in Mr. Bayle's dictionary, is well worth reading.

ly evidence we can give that we believe well. If a man profess his faith in Jesus Christ with one breath, and swear falsely by his name with another, why should I give credit to one who so effectually contradicts himself? We do not credit the propositions of mathematicians till they have gained our assent by demonstration: And why should we trust any man's professions of faith and morality, before he has, by works of faith and morality, proved them sincere? If we hear a man full of the praises of loyalty, and yet see him every day rebelling, would we not take him for a madman or a deceiver? A good life is beneficial both to ourselves and others, but a good belief without it is neither.

But besides, this same belief is perhaps the necessary consequence of evidence; and if so, what is unavoidable, is not virtuous. Where is the praise or merit of feeling the heat of the sun, or the severity of the winter? Or, of hearing sounds when our ears are open? To believe in Christ was and is inevitable: His miracles command assent. But to do his will, is a trial of our piety and virtue. And for our Saviour himself, would his law have been ever received, or his doctrine believed, had he contradicted both by his example? Or could the apostles, without leading the lives of Christians, have gained converts to Christianity?

I have placed faith and practice in this light, to shew how little valuable the pretence of believing well makes men, unless they also live well. I would therefore bring our high clergy to be tried by this test. If they be more zealous for orthodoxy than piety; if they abhor a virtuous man, who prefers the dictates of his own conscience, before those of their ambition and authority; and openly court and honour any person, who is observant of the priesthood, though he live at manifest defiance with heaven; if they treat unbelievers and debauchees as pure churchmen, and devout Christians as schismatics, heretics, and the Lord knows what; their faith is selfish and vain, and such religion is false and absurd.

Conformity is the word! it is the mother of all virtues, and the sanctifier of all crimes. It is, in fine, all in all. And yet, so weak and blind am I, that I take this same applauded conformity to be in some cases a very great sin. If a man for instance, in the worship of God, follow the authority of any church whatsoever, and dissent at the same time from the suggestions and persuasions of his own conscience; it is certain, that he does not worship God at all, but mocks him, adores men, and condemns himself. If, on the other hand, he think his soul in danger, or in no way of being edified in any church, though ever so orthodox; he ought to desert it, and join with that which appears to him better. If I should thwart or disturb my conscience, by bowing fashionably to the altar, I would ask the clergy, whether ought the altar or my conscience to be first or most regarded? He who believes at random, and obeys blindly, may give great satisfaction to churchmen; but he neither knows the gospel of truth, nor obeys the precepts of the Holy Ghost.

It is a surprising thing, the selfishness and pride of man! What priest is there that (in disputes of the most trivial nature) does not grow hot and eager for victory, and angry if his opinion does not prevail? In spiritual affairs, this spirit of levelling all men to our own

conceits, is still fiercer ; and religion, which was given and intended to subdue the passions, is turned into an engine to raise them. We are much more zealous that men should conform to us, than to holiness, and would rather have them obedient than godly. How many high-church parsons would not rather see their parishioners drunken churchmen, than sober dissenters ?

Laymen are at least as capable of judging of error as the clergy, and more proper, as having no interest on either side of the question. However, the latter have usurped this privilege wholly to themselves, and with good policy ; for it has wonderfully answered their great ends of power and wealth. We are not therefore to wonder that many of them give much more countenance and quarter to the most heinous immoralities, which are only sins against God ; than to the least variation from an orthodox opinion, which is an unpardonable sin against themselves. The greatest mistakes, when involuntary, are innocent in the sight of God ; but in the eyes of the priests, the smallest are often damnable. Nay, many a man has been pronounced a heretick, and delivered to hell and the devil, for his pious searches after truth and his devout adherence to it.

Thus we see that God may be pleased, and some of the clergy provoked, by one and the same action. From hence it wofully happens, that weak men and profligates, who will do and say as they are bid, without any bias from reason and conscience, are caressed, encouraged and promoted ; while the wise and virtuous, who cannot abandon truth and the fear of God, to promote the craft, and humour the pride of assuming men, are brow-beaten, reproached and persecuted. Mr. Whiston, and the parson of his parish,* are known instances of this shameful truth.

I know several, who, notwithstanding their avowed disbelief of the gospel and all revealed religion, are in high esteem with the high-clergy ; because, though they deny our Saviour, they reverence his successors ; and are zealous for the hierarchy, though they laugh at religion. The truth is, if a man be but a hearty churchman, it is never asked whether he be a Christian. Profligates, void of common honesty, and common sense, have been, and are still reckoned true friends to the church, and courted by the ecclesiasticks, as their patrons and defenders. And indeed, where religion is turned into faction, such measures and alliances are natural and necessary.

But in the opinion of us Christians, a wicked liver, whether he be a believer or no, is an enemy to religion, which is propagated and supported by example ; and to human society, which is maintained by the bonds of morality. Whereas a good man, though a heretick, is a friend to religion, virtue and his country. To conclude : he who is a rebel to the king of kings, is like to prove but an ill subject to his vicegerant ; and as bad a pattern to his fellow subjects.

G.

* St. Andrew's, Holbourn, where the late Dr. Sacheverell was then Rector.

NUMBER 27.

Of Fasting.

DR. BURNET tells us, in his letters of travels, that the priests of Italy have found out a secret to make men miserable, in spite of all the abundance and profusion wherewith nature hath blessed that happy climate. They measure their own happiness by the people's calamity; enjoy no pleasures in which they take any part; nor are satisfied with all the plunder and depredations which they make upon them, unless they can also heighten their own relish, by making the little which they leave to the laity, insipid and tasteless.

As one instance of this truth; he informs us, that the priests have made it a principle of religion in the people, to mingle water with their wine in the cask, which soon sours it; whereas they always keep their own pure and unmixed, because they say that it is to be used in the sacrament; and so he observes, that travellers can drink no good wine but what they buy from the convents.

For this and such like reasons they preach penances, mortification, fasting, and a contempt of worldly riches, and of all those earthly blessings, which indulgent heaven has given to wretched mortals, to alleviate their sorrows, sweeten their calamities, and make the nauseous draught of life go down; whereas, we cannot better shew our acknowledgments and gratitude to the author of them, than by making a proper use of the good things which he has given us, and by enjoying them in every degree, which will not destroy that enjoyment, and change it into a misfortune.

If we drink or eat more than our heads will carry, or our stomachs digest, distempers, indiscretions, and sometimes murders succeed; and if we spend faster than our incomes will supply, there is a sure foundation laid for future want and misery: but nothing can be more absurd or impious, than to make abstinence from food or pleasures meritorious, any farther than it conduces to health, or qualifies us for business. Almighty God reserved but one tree in all Paradise from our first parents; but the priests would keep them all from their posterity.

Besides, the luxury of the rich (when it does not exceed the bounds of virtue and prudence) is the wealth and support of the poor, and the best judged charity: for, what we give in gross sums to, or for the use of those who appear to be in necessity, is often mistaken, and applied to maintain present idleness, or reward past extravagance; and sometimes too, I doubt, is pocketed by those who are trusted to distribute it: whereas whatever is laid out upon the produce of labour, and for such manufactures as employ multitudes of people, can never be misapplied. It might easily be made to appear, that there is not a piece of wrought silk, linen, or woollen cloth, which has not contributed to the maintenance of more than an hundred thousand industrious people, who must all be kept alive one way or other.

As it is the highest crime to destroy our beings, so it is proportionably wicked to endeavour to make them miserable: the glory and hon-

our of God are best consulted, in promoting the happiness of mankind. It is profane, and a kind of blasphemy, to attempt to persuade people that the good God takes pleasure in the vexing and tormenting his creatures. He is not pleased by human sacrifices, nor by human sufferings of any kind. A pale aspect, the griping of the guts, wry and distorted faces, and being ghosts before our time, will contribute to no ends of religion ; and therefore, I confess, that I cannot see how fasting can serve God, or answer any purposes of devotion, or indeed can enhance any appetite, unless to a good dinner.

Nothing consequently can be more ridiculous, than for the Romanish clergy to tell us, that any part of religion consists in fasting days, and fasting weeks ; which oblige the wretched people to insipid and unwholesome diet, whilst they indulge themselves, and riot in the richest wines, and the luxurious dishes of salmon and turbutt ; with all the costly inhabitants of the liquid element. Besides, it is impolitick, as well as uncharitable ; it discourages trade and industry, depopulates nations, and depreciates matrimony, by rendering the people unable to maintain and raise their families.

Riches and labour are two words which signify the same thing. Nature spontaneously supplies but little to the use of man ; all the rest is the produce of invention and industry : and therefore whatever does contribute to make mankind idle and less useful to one another, conduces so far to their want and misery. One holy-day, strictly kept, robs the poor of more than a whole year's charity will supply. A little loose money picked up at the church doors, and afterwards divided between the parson, church-wardens, and a few favourite objects, will make but poor amends for the taxation of the nation, and of every person in it, with the loss of a day's labour, and profit of his trade ; which loss probably cannot amount to less than two hundred thousand pounds, without having any regard to the extravagance and debaucheries committed upon those days ; which often consume the acquisitions of a week, and render the common people listless, and unwilling to return to their labour again. I may therefore venture to affirm, that there is more charity in taking away one saint's day, than in building and endowing twenty colleges.

However, to do right to my countrymen and their genuine clergy, I must freely confess, that we suffer very little from the penitential observance or fasting part of our holy days ; for the poor do not fast at all, unless they can get nothing to eat ; and the rich, in imitation of their guides, hold out no longer than is necessary to digest their former excesses, and get better stomachs to a double dinner : as old experienced sinners often live a day or two with sobriety and innocence, to enjoy a debauch the remaining part of the week. At the universities, as I am told, it is quite given up, and there is not more epicurism than on those days ; and to their churches there are ancient vestries annexed, which are the consecrated repositories of pipes, sack and tobacco, where the reverends take regularly a whiff and a cup, to prepare them for the fatigues of the ensuing service.

But how little soever holy-days and stated fasts contribute either to the temporal or eternal happiness of the laity, yet the Romanish clergy have been able sufficiently to find their own account in them. When all other shops are shut, theirs are open : where they sell their spiritu-

al cargo of grins, visions, beads, indulgencies, and masses, for silver and gold, lands and tenements; and to enhance the value of their merchandise, and persuade the people of the reasonableness of such an exchange, they make it their business, and exert all their endeavours, to depreciate worldly happiness, and cast down all the good things of this earth, that they may have them all to themselves. If they can extinguish the appetites which God has given us, and teach us the secret to live without our estates, or to make us think it dangerous to live on them, they hope to have them for their pains; for who can have a better title to our superfluities than our spiritual guides, who have inspired us with so much refined devotion, and have given to us lasting estates in paradise, in lieu of a few momentary pleasures, and frail and earthly tabernacles below?

By these arts, and many others, which I shall shew in the progress of this paper, the priests are become possessed of so much dominion and wealth.

T.

NUMBER 28.

Of Authority.

By faith is often, if not most commonly, meant, an inward persuasion or determined assent of the mind to a religious proposition affirmed, or denied; and such consent can never be given but by the conveyance, and from full conviction, of the senses, or the manifest operation of the Holy Ghost; and therefore must depend wholly upon what appears to be infallible inspiration, or infallible information. In this sense of the word, I doubt there can be no such thing in the world; for as no man living ever saw the miracles of Christ and his apostles, or can prove his particular system from self-evident propositions, or can be sure that he is inspired by the Holy Ghost; so he cannot have faith in this sense, whatever he himself may imagine.

Therefore the only reasonable sense of the word is, an assent of the mind to the truth of a proposition, upon probable arguments, or upon the testimony of other persons; which can never produce certainty, but only opinion or belief; which must be stronger or weaker, according to the many degrees of probability. A probable evidence can only produce a suitable assent; and when any thing does not appear at all probable to us, we cannot avoid dissenting as to the truth of it. Almighty God does not require of us to give the lie to our understandings, and to put out and extinguish the only light he has given to men, by which they can discern truth from falsehood, and virtue from vice.

The apostles and evangelists, who were evidently endowed from above with extraordinary gifts and graces, were undeniable witnesses of the truth of the gospel, to those who saw their miracles; and their writings, and the testimony which they bequeathed to their followers, sealed, as it was, with their blood, have passed the examination of ma-

my ages, and constitute the highest degree of human probability, and consequently carry along with them an irresistible authority, and can admit of no disobedience or dispute : they are a real authority, in the most strict sense of the word ; I mean, as it is applied to the propagation of religious opinions, and as producing a lively faith next to persuasion.

But no decisions or resolutions of uninspired men are, or ought to be, of any weight with us, but so far as they will bear the examination of our senses and our reason. The only motive which any man can have to believe, or to put this confidence in another, is, that the person trusted is not deceived himself, and will not deceive him ; neither of which he can have any tolerable assurance of : for no man is infallible ; and the gravest and most solemn pretenders, are as easily cheated as the meer vulgar ; and, what is more, will as often lye and cheat others ; and therefore there can be no such thing as authority in this sense amongst men. For let a matter in itself be ever so certain, I am by no precept human or divine obliged to believe it true, till it is proved true ; and it is the business of my reason alone to distinguish what is so from what is otherwise.

God's word, though to be believed without proof, yet ought first to be proved to be his ; which proof, it is the province of my understanding to examine. The words and allegations of men, or of the church, ought, before they are believed, to be proved, either by divine authority, or by reason : If by reason ; then reason must judge of reason, and every man who has it, is a judge : If by divine authority ; even here our reason must be satisfied, whether it be divine authority or not. So the human authority is either nothing at all ; or at most only an opportunity given, or an invitation made, to examine by private judgment, the truth of what it says.

All books therefore, except the Holy scriptures, and all names, except those of our blessed Saviour and his inspired followers, ought to be of no authority with us, any farther than to convince our understandings by solid arguments, and self-evident truths ; and a beggar or a cobbler, when he can do this, is so far entitled to equal credit, or, if you will, to equal authority, with councils and fathers.

Every man, that reasons with you, appeals to your reason, and his arguments lie at your mercy, whether you will believe them or no ; and every man, who brings you only his assertions, ought also to bring you his proofs, or else you are at full liberty to reject or despise them : It adds nothing to his weight in this matter, that perhaps he wears a cloven cap or a sable gown : There have been no greater deceivers of mankind, than such as have worn these emblems of gravity ; and indeed gravity has ever been one essential characteristick of imposture.

There is no authority in sounding and sanctified names, whether they be those of archbishops, bishops, priests, or deacons. It is very certain, that these goodly words are so far from having any charm in them against deceit and roguery, that the completest of all villanies, and the most masterly and mischievous of all delusions, have been, and still are protected and propagated by them in popish and other priest-ridden nations. His holiness and most holy, are terms appropriated to St. Peter's chair, (and in our precious pope Laud's day they began

to be current at Lambeth) although most that filled that chair, have lived at defiance with God and man, and were the greatest deceivers and disturbers of the world.

Nor is there any certain authority in learning of any kind or degree, who are better scholars, or greater rogues, than the jesuits? Who was a more learned man, or a greater simpleton, than Mr. Dodwell? And, as to his genuine ancestors, Aquinas and Scotus, those celebrated founders of the schools; who have been long the infallible guides of the infallible church; they were the most voluminous and most unintelligible dunces that ever dabbled in sophistry, and darkened common sense.

Pray what evidence of truth necessarily attends the knowledge of the oriental tongues? The jews understand Hebrew, and the turks Arabick; and yet both continue fierce and obstinate enemies to Christianity.

Nor are men the more to be trusted, merely because they are acquainted with ecclesiastical history and the fathers. As to the fathers, they are guilty of grievous errors against orthodoxy, and church power; insomuch that father Petavius, the jesuit, has pretended to prove that most of them were infected with heresy, especially in their notions about the undivided trinity. We all know, that St. Austin (the foreman of all the latin saints and fathers) was for admitting children to the Lord's supper, contrary to the doctrine and practice of our church of England as by law established. St. Jerom derives episcopal power from the instigation of the devil, which is also an impudent reflection upon our orthodox church. St. Basil (I think it was) very fairly challenged the emperour, his liege lord, to fight him; in defiance of the doctrine of passive obedience, which is the peculiar doctrine of our high churchmen; and which, unless a man believes and practises, he cannot be saved. St. Ambrose bullied Theodosius, the Lord's anointed; and refused to admit his Imperial majesty to partake of the Lord's body, till he had made his humble submission. St. Gregory Nazianzen gives a miserable and vile character of synods and councils; and his grace of Canterbury,* when he was bishop of Lincoln, and before, did the same. Dr. Prideaux shews Tertullian to have been a credulous weak man, often mistaken and misled.

As to ecclesiastical history, which is nothing but many large volumes, containing some few of the squabbles of the bishops and inferior clergy with one another, and all the world; I know not whether the use of it can much alter for the better any man's life and principles; since the most which he can learn by it is, that the reverend heroes of the story were eternally cuffing and contradicting one another. Nothing of humility, nor of charity, nor of uniformity, nor of certainty, is to be found amongst them, or learned from them. And I know not at this day any prevailing opinion of any sect of Christians, but what is both countenanced and condemned by one father, or another.

Lastly; even the most apparent piety, the most disinterested mind, and the most unblameable life though to me certain signs of a good man, yet in the eye of our best high church-men, are only shining signs.

* Dr. William Wake

cannot entitle the possessor to the least good word or tenderness ; much less to any authority amongst men. Dr. Clarke, Mr. Whiston, and others, are undeniable instances of this truth.

Upon the whole ; authority, as it is generally understood, is a word pregnant with danger and nonsense. It is a false misleading light, or rather none at all ; for those who follow it, do only grope in the dark : when we blindly trust to another, our own eyes grow useless, or may give offence.

This shews its peril ; and for its absurdity, it will appear from hence, that it is impossible to trust to one authority, without trusting to more. For, either my own reason must be consulted and followed ; and if so, there is an end of all authority : or else, I must trust to some authority to direct me what authority I must trust to. And, if I have liberty to choose my first guide, why not also my second, and so on ? For, no reason can be given, why I may rely on my judgment in one case, and yet must resign it in just such another case.

But if no choice at all is left us in these matters, pray how shall we discern heresy from orthodoxy, and a regular set of ecclesiasticks, from an irregular ? If I am born in Scotland, and educated in the presbyterian way ; must I continue in an invincible antipathy to what is there called proud, lordly prelacy, and superstitious surplices, and popish ceremonies ? Or, have I a right to examine and embrace the doctrine and discipline of our orthodox established church ? Or, am I to embrace them without examining them ? And is my judgment to approve and condemn, only what the parson approves and condemns ; and, in all other spiritual matters, to lie still and take its rest ? If I leave one church for another, out of judgment ; how am I to behave myself when my judgment changes ? Or, is it our duty to conform, in spite of our inclinations ? And have we no right to dissent with conscience and conviction on our side ?

To conform without consenting, is a contradiction, and a mockery to the spirit of religion : and to conform, because I approve, is no compliment to authority, but, indeed destroys it, and justifies every man in every religion, provided he have taken all necessary pains to find out the true one. If I have a liberty to enquire which is the best church, I have also a liberty to blame its errours, if I see any, as well as to admire its excellencies : and the authority of no man or men shall determine me in either, in opposition to my reason. If I praise the advantages of any church, I am myself praised by its votaries, for doing justice to those advantages, which my reason shews me : but if the same reason discover blemishes in it, I am condemned by the same votaries, for what I cannot help. So that I am applauded for seeing, and damned for seeing, at the same time, and from the same principle ; namely, that of passion and partiality.

There is therefore no authority but two, scripture and reason. The scripture is our rule of faith ; and reason, where God gives not his spirit, is our rule for understanding the scripture. G.

NUMBER 29.

Of Education.

It has often been the subject of my serious thoughts, to what causes are owing the depravation of virtue and morality in the world, and the seeming decay of human understanding. If we read the Greek, Roman, and other ancient histories, we shall find another race of men, than seem to be now existing upon the face of the earth. Alexander had conquered the east before thirty ; Scipio and Hannibal performed actions of great eclat before twenty ; Pompey triumphed over Europe, Asia, and Africa, long before his middle age. Indeed, through the whole Roman story, we find their generals, orators, and statesmen, shone in full lustre in their early youth ; and could demand their discharge from public business, before the age at which we are often thought qualified to enter upon it.

This difference sure cannot be owing to any real decay of human nature, which undoubtedly has been always the same since the flood ; on the contrary, 'tis to be presumed, since Almighty God hath communicated to us the marvelous light of his gospel, and has made himself more known to men, that their faculties are bettered and improved. Besides, this difference is observable only in such as are entitled by their birth and fortunes, to the most liberal education ; for, as to arts and sciences, the moderns eminently (as I conceive) exceed the ancients. They are better mathematicians, and mechanicks, better navigators, better musicians, and better husbandmen, and they attain early to their greatest perfection in these arts ; and therefore we must look out for other causes to account for this phenomenon, which I conceive to proceed only from their different manner of education.

The ancients were instructed by philosophers, and the moderns are taught by priests. The first thought it their duty to make their pupils as useful as possible to their country, and the latter as subservient to themselves, and the interests of their order. One endeavoured to inspire them with noble and generous sentiments, equally fit for dominion or subjection ; and the other always instil into them abject, sordid and pusillanimous principles, to qualify them to be proper tools for their own low purposes. In short, the first made it their study and business to enlarge and improve their natural faculties, and growing reason ; and the latter to pervert, stifle and extinguish every approach towards true knowledge and publick virtue.

As soon as the emperours and their courts came into the church, ambition and pride got in too : and the innocence and simplicity of primitive Christianity became corrupted, and changed into outward pomp and pageantry. The clergy bethought themselves how (in the modern phrase) to make the best of their bible. Unluckily it was all against them ; and though they read it over and over, they found it every where levelled against spiritual pride and domination, and they could not so much as pick out one direct text for their purpose.

What must be therefore done in this momentous affair? The holy writings were dispersed abroad, and could not be suppressed; and yet riches and power were of indispensable necessity to the good of the church. Why! since they could not get them out of the people's hands, they contrived how to render them of as little use as possible there; and, in order to it, they pointed all their batteries against human reason, and polite learning, and made it an heinous sin, to read any heathen authors: by which means, in an age or two, few could read at all: and the Romans once so famous for knowledge, virtue and humanity, became (for the most part,) sunk to the lowest dregs of barbarism, superstition and ignorance. But lest the curious and inquisitive part of mankind should not be wholly diverted from the search after knowledge, they invented and substituted in its room, a senseless jargon of undefined insignificant, and canting terms, confused ideas, and indistinct images; which they persuaded the world to esteem profound learning and deep wisdom: and then they reduced and determined all questions in philosophy and religion by this gibberish; and he got the victory, who could hold out longest, and most confound his auditory, by entangling them in an endless labyrinth of nonsense. Men of wit and genius were distasted at a study, which would cost them so much pains to attain, when they could find neither pleasure in the pursuit, nor profit or improvement in the conquest; and having no notion of any other learning, they consented to let the clergy have it all to themselves.

When they had so reduced the laity to this happy and desirable state of stupidity and submission, they took away their bible from them too; or, which was the same thing, they continued it only in a language, which, by the many conquests upon the empire, and the revolutions of time, was understood by none but themselves. And now, having converted their hearers into asses, and beasts of carriage, they bridled them, they saddled them, they yoked them, and put heavy burthens upon them, till they so overloaded them, that they grew resty, and overturned their burthens and riders too.

Thus the world came by the reformation; which dispersed the thick mist of superstition and ignorance, that then overshadowed all Christendom: the laity were resolved to be no longer hood-winked; but a general disposition arose in Europe, to revive ancient learning and useful knowledge: and the Greek and Roman authors were sought after, rescued from dust and worms, and diligently read. Many princes promoted these studies and gave all due encouragement to virtue and learning. But this noble spirit of liberty lasted no longer than the lives of those princes, and while the images of sacerdotal oppression were deep engraven in mens minds; which, like all other things, wore out by degrees.

The principal expedient, necessary to secure all the rest, was never thought of, or, at least, quite forgotten; namely, that of retrieving the education of youth out of the hands of the priest-hood, and of reforming the universities, which were contrived and established by popes, to support their own pride and power over the unhappy laity. Instead of suffering these to continue seminaries of faction, tyranny and ecclesiastical usurpations, they should have been converted into schools of virtue, liberty, knowledge, and true religion: but the old

heaven was permitted to remain, and the clergy had still left to them the education of the nobility and gentry in most countries ; and they were educated accordingly.

It became a maxim in the universities abroad, that those, who were born to large possessions and estates, had no need of learning ; and such were always encouraged or connived at, in mispending their time in idleness and luxury, and were generally made the companions of their governours and tutors in their pleasures, who were perpetually instilling into their tender minds tyrannical or slavish principles. But when they met with youths of sprightly wit and genius, who either from their own inclinations, or the impulse of their relations, would not be diverted from the pursuit of knowledge ; they industriously put them upon a wrong scent, and perplexed and confounded their understandings with metaphysical whimsies, and an artificial cant ; out of which many of them could never extricate their senses ; and such as did, spent often as many years after they came into the world to do so, as they lost before in the universities, to be upon the level with those who had never been there.

This soon became again the state of learning and knowledge amongst the nobility, and gentry ; either they had none at all, or such as they were the worse for having ; insomuch that those, whose birth and fortunes entitled them to be legislators and governours of mankind, were themselves the slaves and dupes of pedagogues and chaplains, were contented to do all their drudgery, and be humble instruments of their pride and luxury.

However, as the priests could not agree amongst themselves about sharing the laity, and, as printing was before this time invented in Christendom, which made it impracticable to suppress all copies of useful books, or to hinder them from being read ; many persons had the virtue and resolution to oppose clerical usurpation, and kept alive some spirit of liberty, in spite of all the efforts of priestcraft and delusion, ever supported by worldly interest, and too often by worldly power.

It is a hard circumstance for truth, that in most countries it must subsist upon converts ; and education, interest and authority must combine against it : but if, notwithstanding all their efforts, its own clear evidence and irresistible authority can make such a progress in the world, what might we not expect, if the approaches and passages to it were made easy and advantageous, and proper rewards and encouragements given to the promoters and discoverers of such philosophy and knowledge, as will make men useful to themselves and their country ? It cannot be doubted, but ancient virtue and ancient eloquence would then revive again ; the nobility and gentry of Christendom would resume their proper stations ; and exceed the inferiour part of mankind, as much in public spirit, courage and wisdom, as they do in fortune and quality ; and possibly might in time as much outshine the Greeks and Romans in those great endowments, as they evidently surpass them in those arts and sciences which the priests do not pretend to teach, and seldom know any thing of.

T.

NUMBER 30.

Of Education. Part 2.

NOT all the cruelty of tyrants, the subtilty and craft of priests, or the malice of devils, have ever invented or brought a greater plague or mischief upon mankind, than false learning. We may be upon our guard against all other calamities ; but here the enemy is within us, and admitted at all times to the innermost recesses of our souls : where he acts the part of a treacherous friend, betrays us under the pretence of serving us, and administers poison in cups of seeming nectar and ambrosia. We are gradually deprived of our senses, whilst we think we are improving them ; become fools by industry and great application ; like Tantalus, are starved with an imaginary banquet at our mouths ; and, in the midst of an appearing profusion of knowledge, want common sense ; and, what is yet worse, are insensible of our distemper, and consequently are incapable of a remedy.

Our minds as well as bodies are easily distorted, and put out of their natural frame ; absurdity and nonsense is to be learned, and good natural faculties may be improved into foolish ones, or none at all. A man, like a vessel, is capable of holding only a certain quantity, which when it is full of one liquor, is incapable of receiving another ; and even when the first is drawn out, it generally leaves a tincture behind it. The mind, when rightly set out, usefully employed, and upon proper objects, will improve, and every day strengthen ; but when conversant only with visions, phantoms and whimsys, will assimilate with the company which it keeps, and thus by degrees loses its distinguishing faculty.

A proper exercise, and a natural use of the limbs, give health and vigour, as well as gracefulness and becoming motion ; whereas grimace and absurd posture, are qualifications only for jack-puddings and merry-andrews. One who has been long taught by an ill master, is farther from a good dancer, than another who has never begun ; because he must unlearn all his ill habits, to be in the circumstance of him who has not learned at all ; as a man, who gets out of his road, is farther from his journey's end, than if he had staid at home ; and commonly must return thither again, to find out his right way.

Whoever spends his time in reading foolish books, and in studying useless or false speculations, will grow the greater coxcomb, the greater progress he makes : he is learning backwards, and undermining and destroying the first sparks of knowledge, and in time will be fortified and impregnable against common sense. A great philosopher tells us, that ignorance is a middle state between knowledge and false learning ; that is to say, one who is wholly untaught and unimproved, is as much above a learned man, in the common acceptation of the word, as a man well educated does exceed another who has had no education at all : The capacity of the first is entire, and susceptible of information ; whereas in the other, all the avenues and passages to wisdom are des-

troyed or looked up, and he is so puzzled, perplexed and confounded in a maze of improved nonsense and absurdity, that he can never get through it or out of it. The acquisitions in such learning have been aptly compared to the fluttering and rumbling of a swallow falling down a chimney, who, when he is at bottom, flies about, and hurries backwards and forwards to every window, and every corner of the room to make his escape ; but never thinks of the way by which he came in, and so becomes an easy prey to the first enemy which assaults him.

Whoever is conversant with scholasticks, and has any understanding of his own, (if such a correspondence can possibly be) must readily assent to this truth. It is even grown a proverb in the learned language, that *merus scholasticus est merus asinus* : What an appearance do these reverend drones and accomplished dunces make amongst mankind ? How are they exceeded in conversation, agreeable address, and useful knowledge, by the youngest gentlemen, by soldiers and merchants, and often by mechanicks and tradesmen, who can only write and cast accompts ? Nothing but the solemnity of their habits, and the austere gravity of their phiz, mein and behaviour, hinders them from being the jest and contempt of women and boys. It is said, that villiers, duke of Buckingham, once took a conceit to invite all the deep chins about the town to a magnificent entertainment spread upon a long table ; and he made himself amends, by sitting at the upper end, and enjoying the visto. Indeed I cannot deny, but I have sometimes had such a sort of ill natured pleasure, in imagining that I saw some of the Governours of the two universities (with others of their betters, who shall be nameless) uncased of their reverential robes, and dressed up with hats and feathers, sword-knots and laced coats, and in that equipage marching in solemn guise, like a call of serjeants from Temple-Bar to Westminster.

They give us, in some degree, the same figure, when they shew themselves in the world abroad ; like snails, they carry their houses about them, and bring pedantry, conceit, sour humour, bigotry, magisterial grimace, and ill manners, into all conversations where they mix ; and indeed are seldom fit for any polite conversation whatsoever. They have neither the temper of Christians, the reason of philosophers or the affability of gentlemen, and therefore are justly despised by them all. Frier John, as I remember, asks of Panurge or Pantagruel in Rabelais, what is the reason that the household priest is used worse than any one else in the family ? And, I think, he answers, because he neither ploughs the ground like the laborious ox, nor carries burthens like the useful horse, nor keeps the door like the faithful dog ; but like the monkey, runs about every where fouling the house, chattering and making a noise, biting people's fingers, and doing nothing but mischief ; and so every body has a stroke at him, and gives him a knock as he passes by.

The writings of many of these solemn gentlemen are of the same kind, and carry the same tragical and grim aspect. They would be dictators in faith and science, and so their books are full of the spirit of pedantry, false zeal and ill-breeding, and, under the appearance and affectation of learning, contain only paradoxes, uncertainty, harsh severity, or awkward buffoonery. Any one, who is the least acquainted with these dogmatical zealots, these punning inquisitors, must

own that I have done justice to their characters, and the merit which runs through them; unless in some instances, mostly about this great town, where an uncommon natural genius, liberty of mind, generous birth, or a free conversation has got the better of a constrained and corrupt education.

I thank God, such as have of late years had the honour of being admitted to great dignities, and been brought into the legislature or royal councils, are of the latter sort. But what figure have others formerly made in the senate house, or council board? How much below young noblemen, who had never been at the universities, or had just forgot what they had learned there, and rubbed or filed off college rust by polite conversation? In one you might have observed an easiness of address, softness of speech, and freedom of thought; in the other, starchiness of behaviour, sourness of looks, and starved conceits, urged with fierce and impetuous rage. A late noble and great genius of our age and country, compares them to those grotesque figures, and dragon faces, which are often seen in the frontispiece, and upon the corner stones of old buildings. They seem placed there as the defenders and supporters of the edifice; but with all their grimace, are as harmless to people without, as they are useless to the building within.

T.

NUMBER 31.

Of Ceremonies.

Plainness and simplicity are not more inseparable marks of truth, than they are of true religion, which wants neither paint nor pageantry, to recommend itself to the hearts of men. It wins the affections, by the force of its persuasions; and the understanding, by the reasonableness of its precepts. It abhors violence, as opposite to its nature; and despises art and policy, as below its dignity. Human ornaments may hide and disfigure, but cannot preserve nor improve its intrinsick beauty, and divine lustre. And pomp and grimace, as they are no wise akin to it, so neither are they the effects of it, nor bring any advantage to it. On the contrary, they tend to fill the mind with gross ideas, or sullen fear; and so create superstition instead of piety, and farce instead of worship.

God himself has told us, that he will be worshipped in spirit and in truth: which shews that love and sincerity constitute devotion, and that religion resides in the mind. As to bodily religion and corporeal holiness, the gospel is silent about them; leaving every one to behave his own way in the practice of piety.

It is justly esteemed the glory and felicity of the Christian religion, that by it we are released from that grievous yoke and bondage of ceremonies, which neither we nor our fathers were able to bear. It is a religion of reason, void of all superfluities, and trifling impertinences.

Men cannot judge of one another's thoughts and inclinations, but by words and actions: And, because it would be both troublesome and silly to be on every occasion harranguing our friends and superiours, upon the profound veneration which we profess for their persons or characters; it has become necessary to agree upon some outward forms, to denote internal respect. And this I take to be the only good reason which can be given for such manner of address or ceremony. It is ridiculous, either by sounds or gestures, to tell a man over and over again, what he knows already; and therefore, the most intimate friends and old acquaintance make but little use of shew or compliment; and those, who make most, are ever found the least sincere. But how senseless and absurd must it be to entertain Heaven with such grimaces! that heaven, which searches our hearts, and knows our most hidden thoughts; and will not be deceived by outward, arbitrary and falacious marks of inward disposition!

It can never be conceived, that the Allmerciful and Omniscient God should, by the sending of his Son, abolish, or suffer to be abolished, the whole Jewish legion of ceremonies, though appointed by himself in person; and should graciously condescend to establish a new dispensation, destitute of all ceremony and exteriour grandeur; and yet should leave it to the ambition of designing men, or to the folly of weak ones, to invent and impose a fresh load of rituals, in opposition to the plain genius of the gospel. This would be for the Allmerciful, to be merciful in vain; for the Creator to resign his power to the creature; and for God to recall his own injunctions, which he once gave for a gracious and wise end, since ceased, that men may enforce their's, for a weak or a wicked one.

Nothing is, or can be, pure religion, but either what God commands and tells us he will accept; or what is dictated by eternal reason, which is the law of nature: And whatever is superadded, however dignified by a venerable name, is no part of true religion; which, as has been said, can be supported by nothing but divine revelation, or divine reason. When both these are wanting, we wander in the dark, and worship blindfold; being led by the hand of conjecture and invention, which are uncertain and endless.

This is so true, that wherever there is true religion, there are few ceremonies: And, on the other hand, where ceremonies abound, there religion is either utterly lost, or miserably decayed; and, in popish countries, it is more or less visible, according as ceremonies and bigotry (which, like cause and effect, go always hand in hand) are more or less practised or promoted. Thus, in France, where, through the commerce of the kingdom with protestants, there are still some remains of common sense, and consequently of religion; God Almighty is worshipped as well as dead men, though not so much: Whereas, in Italy and Spain, the Saints have deprived their Maker of all devotion; and the blessed virgin, St. Dominick, St. Jago, and St. Anthony, are, by these hot-headed bigots, made governours of Heaven and earth, and the givers of eternal life; and consequently are become, next immediately after the priests, the only objects of their adoration. If you deprive them of their saints and their ceremonies, there is not the least face of religion left amongst them.

So little has Christianity gained by ceremonies, that a great part of mankind have, by adopting them, banished all true religion. If they were introduced, as it is alleged, to kindle piety ; I am sorry to say, it has so happened, that this heat of devotion has quite drank up the truth and vitals of religion ; and the blind compliance with a senseless cringe, invented and enjoined by a popish priest, is made of more importance and merit, than the possession of all moral and Christian virtues, without it. Religion, good sense, and humanity, are inseparable friends ; but a superstitious fondness for ceremonies is a contradiction, and an affront to all the three.

The teachers of mankind have, for the greatest part, been the most unteachable of all men ; and these our guides to peace have been always the foremost to break it. They have seen, from time to time, the violence and ungodly effects produced by their contention for human forms, habits and decisions ; and yet, where the religious laity and the law did not interpose, to restrain this unchristian behaviour in churchmen, they have not only still adhered with obstinacy to their inventions and impositions, but frequently made it their business to broach new ones, and to throw about fresh balls of strife and cruelty.

Ceremonies were first brought in under a very plausible pretence ; namely, that of aiding and promoting religion : But we have seen, by above a thousand years experience, that these its pretended friends always become its real rivals and successful enemies ; and, by the help of those, whose interest it was to contrive and support them at any rate, never failed to banish it far away as their power extended.

It is pretended, that the invention of stated ceremonies and garments is justified by these words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, *Let all things be done decently, and in order* ; which words are only a precept to avoid immodesty and confusion, in their religious assemblies. Two, for example, were not to speak at the same time : One was not to sing psalms, while another prayed. Neither love nor trade was to be the business of their meetings ; nor tythes and their own power the drift and business of the preachers : Christ was not to be confounded with Belial ; nor pride and dominion with meekness and Christianity : exhorting was not to be mixed with railing, nor praying with cursing ; nor were the people to be taught to hate one another : In short, God was to be adored with the heart and affections, and not with a fiddle, or a pipe and tabor.

I do not find, that the Apostle's words were understood in any other sense than this, by those to whom they were addressed : It does not appear that immediately upon the sight of St. Paul's epistle, the Corinthians concluded that prayers should be said in surplices ; and that the faithful, as soon as the word was given, should kneel, stoop and stand, or turn to the right and left, like a file of musqueteers ; or that they were to nod towards the east, as if the Almighty kept his court only there.

Nor were the Corinthians directed by this text to play popish tricks over the forehead of a babe baptised, as sure and certain signs of regeneration ; nor were they commanded to put their petitions in quavers, and to sing their prayers as well as say them ; nor was that subtle distinction then and there found out, of bowing at the name of Jesus, but not at the name of Christ or of God.

All these pretty fashions were unknown to the apostle and his correspondents; and their gentleness and significancy have been long since discovered by the Romish clergy in the latter days; and indeed, it is now become impossible to make one's court well without them.

The words decorum and significancy, which are made use of to justify the celebration of ceremonies, are words of such prodigious latitude, that the world does not agree, nor ever can agree, what it is that does come properly under their denomination, and what does not. With the Turks it is decent to be covered at devotion; with us to be bare-headed. How is the wearing of a perriwig, or a cap, more decent and orthodox than the wearing of a hat? How is a prinella gown, or a lawn frock more significant than a cloth coat? Is God Almighty better pleased with a cambrick band than with a muslin cravat? And is an organ-lost more acceptable to him than plain country piety, that has neither motion nor musick in it?

If men be at liberty to invent and enjoin one unnecessary ceremony, why not two? And if two, why not two thousand? When such a power is once granted, it cannot be easily, nor indeed reasonably limited. If the clergy can oblige me to throw my head into my bosom, upon their pronouncing certain sounds; they may, by the same right, upon pronouncing different sounds, oblige me to run it against a stone wall; nay, which is still worse, whoever has an authority to direct my manner of worship, must have also a power to direct the matter of it, and may command me whom to worship, as well as how.

Superstition in the people, and power in the priests, were the true ends and consequences of creating popish ceremonies; for, as to their significancy, it was a mere bubble and pretence. Such a plea would justify endless phrenzy and fooleries; and every madness would be made a mystery. For instance; we might be made to walk bare-footed into the church, to signify the sanctity of the place; and to crawl upon all four out of it, to signify the humiliation of our hearts. A match of cudgel-playing every Sunday might be instituted, to signify our spiritual warfare; and a game at blind-man's buff, to signify the darkness of our understandings. In short, any thing might be made to signify every thing; and any punishment be inflicted upon the prophane gainsayer: And upon this foot may be justified all the pagan and popish fopperies that ever were, or ever could be invented; and nothing can be said against all the many garments, and many colours, and many antick gestures used by the Romish priests at this day.

It must be evident to every intelligent man, that all this pretty pagantry and raree-show, can never make men more acceptable to God, who will not be gratified or obliged by a jig or a tune. But, I believe I may safely affirm, that if all this merry-making and jovial devotion in the popish churches do no manner of good, they must needs do harm; because they divert the mind from deliberate devotion and calm repentance, and can at best only work it up to a wild and enthusiastick worship.

However, though this pompous parade in piety does no service to religion, it effectually answers the end proposed by it; and contributes vastly, as every thing else does, to the advancement and grandeur of the Romish clergy, as it turns men's thoughts from divine objects to a superstitious veneration for postures, habits, grimaces, cringes, utensils,

&c. all invented by priests, who are always sure to appoint themselves masters of the ceremonies, and to be well paid for their deep knowledge in this momentous science. Besides, it lists into their service great numbers of people ; such as organists, fiddlers, singing-men, with all the piping and chanting crew, as well as artificers of various kinds. It engages men of pleasure, and ladies, in their interests ; it catches the multitude by the ears and the eyes, and sets them a staring ; and it alleviates their own drudgery of frequent preaching and praying ; it also serves the purposes of interludes in the perpetual tragides they are acting ; which they render less terrible, by playing, like Nero upon their harps, in the midst of conflagrations of their own making.

What a blessing is it to this church and kingdom, that all this farce in devotion is forbidden by the act of uniformity, as well as by our homilies ; as shall be further taken notice of, when I treat again upon the same subject. G.

NUMBER 32.

Of Ceremonies. Part 2.

My last paper treated of superstitious ceremonies ; and this shall contain a prosecution of the same subject.

The pagan religion consisted altogether in a vast number and variety of strange and senseless ceremonies ; and, being foolish and false, it could consist of nothing else. Its votaries had, for their religious task, certain frantick actions to perform, certain wanton motions to make, or certain mad races to run ; sometimes galloping about the streets like lunatics, stark naked, and sometimes half naked ; or in a religious antick dress, significantly suited to their behaviour. They were to be religious with their heads, feet, joints, and their other organs : they were also to utter certain harsh and devout sounds, which had no meaning, but were prodigious significant, and being very ridiculous, were very decent.

During all this holy exercise, which was edifying in proportion as it was mad, their minds were possessed with a drunken festivity and wantonness, or with craziness and enthusiastick fear. They were either lewd or raving, rakes or fanaticks. It never entered into their heads, nor did their priests ever put it into them, that religion was a sober thing, consisting in the exercise of reason, and the practice of virtue. No ; a spirit of sobriety, or a ray of understanding, would have blown up the authority and dominion of the heathen parsons ; and therefore, the poor lay pagans were not suffered to know that a man might be a religious man, without being a good dancer, and please God without roaring and running races.

This was the godly and wholesome discipline, invented and instituted by the pagan clergy, for the use and edification of the deluded and idolatrous world. Action and outside was all that they knew of reli-

gion ; and therefore their superstition took great delight in building and beautifying temples. They imagined, that the doing of a thing which had any reference to religion, was actually a piece of religion ; and that any jobb of work about a holy place, was, in good earnest, a jobb of holiness. They might have as rationally believed, that masons, joiners, and plaisterers, employed about a temple, derived piety and merit from that employment.

Had not pagan ceremonies (and pagans were the first inventors of ceremonies) signified nothing, or rather something very bad, as indeed it was evident to every eye, that they were either senseless or impious ; our Saviour would never have instituted, as he did, a religion without one ceremony in it. The religion of the gospel is as pure from fancies and ceremonies, as from pride and the spirit of dominion.

Our blessed saviour knew well, that the crafty and prophane priests had, by their shameless inventions and filthy ceremonies, polluted or abolished all religion ; and therefore, in mercy to mankind, founded a religion without priests, and without ceremonies : (as shall be fully shewn hereafter.) For, it is to be observed, that while the established church of paganism flourished, priests and ceremonies always flourished or increased together.

Such was the simple institution of the gospel : But when popery began to expel Christianity, ignorance and ceremonies were some of the principal engines by which it effected the same. For, as the meekness of Christians was then converted into the cruelty of barbarians, and the plainness of the gospel into all the detestable fopperies of paganism ; so holiness of heart was changed into holiness of posture ; the humility of soul into bodily bowings ; the worship of God into the worship of bread, and the piping of organs : and the clergy, as they had called themselves, were no longer cloathed with meekness, but with surplices. &c.

Nor was this mighty revolution, this unnatural transition from the beauty and gentleness of Christianity, to the unhallowed spirit and abominable rituals of the heathens, at all hard or impracticable. The people had, by the idleness, insufficiency, and debaucheries of the ecclesiasticks, become corrupt and blind to the last degree, and therefore ran readily and cheerfully into every new absurdity. Whatever the bishop pronounced decent, though ever so vile or silly, his conforming flock received as reverend and edifying. A gross and sensual manner of worship, suited best with the grossness of their understandings, and the sensuality of their minds. They had no conception of the spiritual nature of the gospel, and of that evangelical grace, which operates internally, and is wholly employed about the soul, but produces neither cringes, nor dances, nor grimaces.

A religion therefore of ceremonies, which is no religion at all, agreed well with those carnal Christians, who were taught to place all religion in ceremonies. When the ignorant vulgar are once persuaded that ceremonies are good for any thing, they come quickly to think them good for every thing ; and the more, the merrier ! They are delighted with shadows and mystery, and juggling. Ignorance, like every other habit, is daily improving itself, and increases in strength as in years : it delights to be still plunging into farther and deeper darkness. The less people understand, the more they stare ; and because there is noth-

ing in the gospel but plain piety, plain reason, and plain matter of fact : therefore it can raise no wonderment in them, and consequently no pleasing piety : but strange and mysterious ceremonies can do all this ; and, for that reason, have always got the better of religion in all bigotted countries.

Here therefore is a glorious and ample field of gaping, sottishness, and credulity, for crafty priests to play their tricks, and sow superstition in. And, indeed, they have topped their parts, in this undertaking, with such dexterity and success, that their humble and resigned votaries do not any longer pretend to carry their own eyes or understanding : their very palates and noses are priestridden, and dare neither taste nor smell, without an ecclesiastical licence. Thus even the invincible operations of the animal spirits, and of the five senses, must stand still, when commanded by the priest, who can annihilate the creature, and create his creator.

As under the sacred name of God and religion, the greatest irreligion and impieties have been propagated ; so, under the colour and umbrage of significant and decent ceremonies, the most ridiculous and immodest usages have been introduced. It would require more than a whole paper to expose all the many apish gesticulations, of the Romish mass ; I shall only run over a few of them.

The priest, in the administration of mass, must wear a white linen garment, which, I suppose, must signify whiteness ; for I cannot see a more obvious meaning in it. The same was also worn by the primitive heathen clergy, when they butchered bullocks, to appease their deities.

As he approaches towards the altar, having great devotion in his back-bone, he bows, and bows, and ducks his head, as if he was playing at hop-frog. The altar is also covered with a surplice, or white cloth, which, doubtless, signifies some great mystery ; but, in prophane eyes, typifies only a damask table-cloth. It moreover stands towards the east, which, to be sure, has a deep meaning, and seems to imply, as if God Almighty was either more merciful or more powerful in that quarter of the world, (though he made it all) than in any of the other three ; or as if he liked that climate best, and all those who bow to it.

He then, after many monkish gestures and scrapings, says a world of of short prayers, (the whole service being judiciously sliced into pretty little morsels of devotion) and reads scraps of scripture ; all which prayings and readings would not be half so wholesome any where else ; as they are just at the elbow of the altar. Then there is a lighted candle standing by him at noon-day, probably to signify there is light enough without it. Now, in some churches the altar is only illuminated with dark candles, which for ought I know, may be equally mysterious and significant. But upon this great and essential point, I shall pronounce nothing dogmatically.

The priest then mutters words over the bread and wine, which thereupon start into Omnipotent flesh and blood ; and the living Jesus is swallowed whole, in remembrance of the dead one ; and the priest makes his Maker and the people eat him. The wine which the priest very naturally keeps all to himself, must not be poured out of a bottle into a glass, which would not be significant enough ; but out of a flaggon, which, being of silver or gold, and holding more liquor, is conse-

quently very significant. He repeats, Lord have mercy upon us, very often, to signify that he does it more than once ; and speaks loud, to signify, that he may be heard.

But I am quite sick of this strange significant stuff, before I have gone through the tenth part of it. The whole performance is perfectly theatrical, and improperly and impiously called a sacrament. It is indeed a wretched, unentertaining interlude ; a stupid farce, of which the priest is the chief mimic ; for mumbling and making mouths does not deserve the name of acting.

We have had several attempts made to revive amongst us this infamous mummerly in devotion, and these apish ceremonies ; which are an affront to common sense, and below the dignity of human nature, much more of religion : but such attempts can never succeed, while we enjoy either liberty or knowledge. Archbishop Laud, therefore, when he had bewitched the court, swayed the scepter, and destroyed the liberty of the people and of the press, took the best opportunity he could get, to transport Rome to Lambeth ; and having married the harlot, he adopted her trumpery.

A sample of this man's genius for popery may be seen in his mad manner of consecrating some new brick and mortar which had been used in the repair of St. Catherine Creech-church, London ; as the same is related at large by Rushworth. At his approach to the west-end of the church, the doors flew open, upon pronouncing certain words out of the Psalms, that the king of glory might enter ; and then entered the bishop, and falling down upon his knees, baptised the ground, or, which is the same thing, pronounced it holy, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Then he threw dust in the air, and played some other pious pranks. Then he pronounced many curses, and called upon the people to curse with him. Then he scattered a basket-full of blessings amongst all the masons, and other holy mechanicks, who had helped to make that church fine. He also went round the church in procession, and told God Almighty and the people, over and over, that that was holy ground. At last, after a bead-roll of prayers, and a hundred and fifty bowings, and after many wild gestures, sometimes advancing, sometimes recoiling, like one affrighted and crazy, he gave the sacrament.

Besides all this, he removed the communion-table, and placed it in the chancel altar-wise, contrary to the express direction of the rubrick ; which says, that it shall stand where morning and evening prayer is directed to be said. He made pictures of the Trinity, and caused them to be hung up in churches ; and was guilty of many other popish innovations, all tending to create fanaticism and superstition.

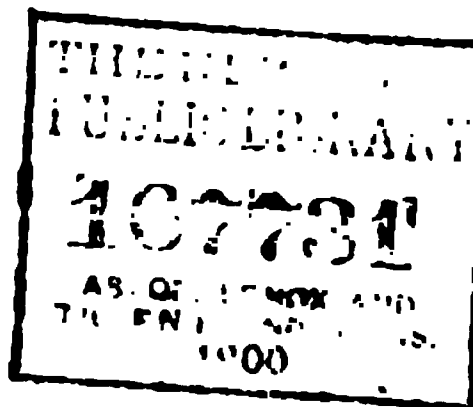
This paper grows too long, and leaves me no room to do justice to crosses, square-caps, and fantastical garments : all which, I warrant you, are profoundly mysterious ; though to carnal eyes, they seem only to signify to make the people stare : for every odd sight strikes the imagination, and disposes the beholder either to laughter or reverence. Nor have I time to honour, with a proper encomium, that ingenious and ecclesiastical device, of explaining the sublime mystery of the Trinity by a pair of compasses, though it is above all explication, and even of conception, unless through faith ; and of representing the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, by a triangle in a circle, over the communion-table.

ble Was there ever such a pretty piece of pious cunning ! By the said triangle is typified and held forth to us, that the said triangle consists of three angles ; which is exceeding plain and edifying : and by the circle is signified, that the said circle is but one circle, which is prodigious good again ! But, that a triangle is a circle, and a circle is a triangle, Dr. Waterland saith not.

I must, for the same reason, pass over unobserved, the praising of God with organs, which our Homilies very uncivilly call superstitious ; cuts in the common-prayer books, tending to prepare people for idolatry ; and pictures in churches, for the same devout purpose. G.

The end of the First Volume.

VOLUME SECOND.



NUMBER 33.

The ignorance of the high-church vulgar, and its Causes.

I HAVE always thought the best constituted church in the world to be that, which forms and produces the most religious and most rational members. Churches are places where men are, or should be, taught the love of God, and of virtue ; and when people have been long used to perform divine discipline, and, as they imagine, receive instruction in moral and evangelical duties, in these stately fabricks, they generally conceive a deep reverence and devotion for the buildings themselves, and for every thing that is said in them, as well as a great opinion of the wisdom and sanctity of the teachers, who preside there, and dictate *ex cathedra* : they esteem them as persons sent by God himself, to deliver a message from his own mouth ; for which also they have often the word of the preacher—No small reason to the many for the believing of it !

So that here is an uncontrollable prepossession in favour of every doctrine, or every dream, which corrupt priests shall think fit to deliver. And indeed, the high-church clergy have never failed to make their advantage of this superstitious awe and credulity of their hearers ; and to sanctify every falshood, and every whimsey and impiety uttered by them, with a misapplied or preverted text of scripture ; and so prostituted and prophaned the high and holy name of God, to patronize their impostures. I shall give some instances.

When they have had a mind to flatter a cruel or a foolish prince, in order to make him serve their purposes, and do their drudgery ; they have instantly entitled him God's vice-gerent, though he acted at the same time by the instigation of his lust or of satan. And, because David and Saul, being appointed by God himself, by word of mouth, were called the Lord's anointed ; therefore every tyrant, who was not appointed by God himself, but seized a crown by violence or surprize, became also the Lord's anointed. And because Adam was the father of his own son, therefore he was the king of his own son ; and therefore all such kings, who had not Adam for their father, were nevertheless, in right of Adam, kings and fathers of their subjects, who yet were not their children, but for all that owed them the duty of children whilst they were plundering and ruining them ; and all the rapine and murders which they were prompted to commit, by their anger or their avarice, were called the ordinance of God, and were to be submitted to, with Christian stupidity, on pain of damnation : that is, it was made damnation to resist actions and cruelties which deserved damnation.

And as you were to submit to law and justice, on pain of damnation, so ought you to submit to the overturning of all law, and all justice, on pain of damnation also. And, because when we have any matter of complaint, we are bid to acquaint the church with it ; therefore the people, who are the church, are, in every case to be determined by the parson of the parish, who is not the church. And, because we are to confess our sins one to another ; therefore we are to do it to a priest, which is not doing it to one another. And because Abraham gave the tenth of his plunder to Melchisedeck, who was not a priest of our church by law established ; therefore our established priests, who have nothing to do with Melchisedeck, nor know any thing of him, have a divine right to the tenth part of every man's estate and industry. And, as the tribe of Levi had a right to tythes, though they and their tythes are long since abolished ; so ought our parsons to have the same tythes by the gospel, without being in the least a-kin to Aaron's person, or heirs to his estate, or successors to his institution. And, though our Saviour's kingdom is not of this world ; yet the kingdom of the high clergy, who, if you will take their words for it, are his representatives, is, and ought to be, of this world. And, because the reprobate and gluttonous monks had, by endless rogueries, and diabolical lyes, plundered the deluded laity of their possessions, and engrossed to themselves most of the lands of England ; therefore our modern high priests have a natural and hereditary right to enjoy the same : And, though they have, upon oath, renounced all power, and all pretence to power, but what the law vouchsafes to grant them ; yet they have a power independent on the law, and principles independent on these very oaths, though renounced by these very oaths.

All these, and many more absurdities, equally vile and impudent, have been blasphemously fathered upon scripture, and the author of scripture ; though they all contradict the scripture, as well as they do common sense and common honesty. But as the vulgar do always take that to be the highest point of religion, about which their teachers make the most noise, for the time being, whether it be tythe, or Dr. Cacheverel, or the pretender, or the late duke of Ormond, or king Charles the first ; so vicious and corrupted clergymen, on their part, have always tacked the name of God, or, which is much more powerful with the mob, the name of the church, to any assertion, or any claim, or any invention of theirs, be it ever so monstrous or mischievous ; and instantly it becomes, with weak people, an article of faith, upon which salvation itself depends. For, as it is their first care, to force a testimony from Heaven for every whim, or forgery of theirs ; so their next concern is, to make every contradiction and opposition to it, damnable.

Hence it comes to pass, that the same virtues are not of the same importance at all times ; but virtues are made vices, and vice is made virtue, just as the present temper, or the present views prevail : and, by corrupt priests, things are often taught under the name of Christianity which are opposite to the nature of Christianity : Religion is pretended, and power meant. In consequence of this, duty is converted into sin, and sin into duty. Thus, the worshipping of God according to one's conscience, without which there can be no worship, is made by the high-church priest a damnable sin ; and the not worshipping a

table in the chancel, though in opposition to one's conscience, is as bad. Sometimes the resisting of unlawful power, is certain damnation ; and sometimes the not rebelling against the most lawful power, has the the same terrible penalty annexed to it. To doubt or deny their uncharitable, unintelligible explications of mystery, which cannot be explained, is the most heinous atheism ; and to whip a seditious, forsworn priest, is crying infidelity, and a wound to Christ, through the sides of his ambassador.

At one time, predestination is of high consequence, and made an article of faith, and all free-willers should be banished the land, or locked up in dungeons, like wild beasts ; which was the judgment of the bishops in king James the first's days, concerning the Arminians. At a different season, when preferments run high on the other side, as in king Charles the first's reign, and ever since ; Arminianism not only recovers credit, but grows modish, and consequently orthodox ; while predestination becomes an old-fashioned piece of faith, and a sure sign of fanaticism : and yet it continues one of the 39 articles, and yet it must not be believed, and yet it must be signed and assented to with a sincere assent.

In all these marches and counter-marches, the passions of too many of the people keep pace with those of the high priests ; and they are constantly disposed to be slaves or rebels, free-willers, or no willers, believers of this, or believers of that, just as almighty high-church commands them.

Such men do not pretend to teach their people the meekness of Christianity : No, their zeal is to be anger, and their religion cruelty. That fierceness, which is inconsistent with the spirit of a Christian, is to be the certain criterion of one whom they call a true churchman ; and that mercy, which is inseparable from the gospel, is inconsistent with the temper of high-church. Their votaries are not taught to be Christians, which would spoil the project, but high-churchmen ; and instead of an army of martyrs, they are to be an army of martyr-makers. Nor is any portion of knowledge fit for them ; for that might endanger the loss of their vassallage ; and the teaching them to know for themselves, might extinguish their zeal, and entirely change their belief and behaviour. The poor people are, in short, by such guides taught to be ignorant, and to let others know for them : They must give up common sense, to learn their duty ; and abandon Christianity, without which they cannot have the grace of God, to embrace rigid conformity, which is neither a sign, nor a cause of that grace, but often a bar and a contradiction to it. This is so true, that whoever can reconcile human authority to Christian charity, may reconcile water and fire, or do any other impossibility.

Tenderness and moderation to those who devoutly differ from us, though they are evident principles and duties of Christianity, and even the result of reason, justice, and humanity, yet are never mentioned by the mouth of orthodoxy, but as terms of contempt or reproach. In-somuch, that a pious indulgence to men of a different communion, the most honest, virtuous, inoffensive men ; and an indulgence for the invincible, and perhaps rational persuasions of the mind, is the common topick of satire, and either ridiculed or reviled ; whilst men of the same side may go what lengths they will in violence and villany, with-

out anger or rebuke : and while one man shall have his house burned, his brains beat out, and his family ruined, for having a scrupulous conscience, which is much more offensive than none at all ; another man shall break all the ten commandments with reputation.

Hatred and bitterness of spirit, are the first lessons which the unhappy people are taught by such men ; and the gospel must be laid aside, and good-nature be extinguished, before modern orthodoxy can be swallowed, or modern zeal infused. Some of them may probably have learned to repeat the catechism by rote, and even to have practised profound respect and submission to their spiritual superiors ; but for the great and indispensable duties of religion, how can it be expected that they should mind them, while they daily see their teachers express a much more warm concern for their own dignities and revenues, than for the honour and interest of pure unmixed religion, which was ever highest when ecclesiastical power and ecclesiastical excise were lowest.

When a congregation sees the doctor much warmer against dissenters, than against sin, and not half so zealous for the absolute necessity of a virtuous and sober life, as for the absolute necessity of a rigid conformity ; what can they conclude, but either that he derides them, or that a stupid compliance with him, and a raging resentment against nonconformists, are the great duties of churchmen ? Add to this, if his life be vicious, such a conclusion is still the more natural to vulgar understandings. When they see church-power so violently contended for, and gospel-holiness so little regarded, or so easily dispensed with ; what can their stupid understandings infer, but that a blind submission to the ecclesiasticks, is beyond all evangelical grace, and every moral virtue ? They find by daily experience, that they may commit drunkenness or whoredom, with impunity, or at small expence ; but if they do not give the doctor what he calls his due, even to the last sheaf of corn, or the last pound of wool, they are exposed in the pulpit, harassed in the bishops court, and probably, at last, surrendered to satan and damnation.

Besides, they oftener hear texts quoted in some pulpits, to abuse separatists, than to recommend godliness and virtue ; and see the mode of performing a duty more vehemently urged, than the duty itself : thus kneeling at the Lord's supper, is made by many of equal importance with the sacrament itself ; and the cross in baptism must no more be parted with, than the ordinance of baptism.

It is therefore no wonder that the affections and antipathies of the common people have neither proper causes nor proper objects, and that they neither love the gospel as such, nor hate sin as such ; but form their faith and devotion upon the word and behaviour of their priests, who have the keeping of their religion, their zeal, and their passions ; and what hopeful use they make of this terrible dominion, we all know : for indeed the Christian religion, is not so much as known to the high-church vulgar, nor suffered to be known : and as little do they feel, or are suffered to feel, the tender impulses of good-nature and humanity ; but possess an implacableness of spirit, as opposite to the spirit of Christ, as was the spirit of Mahomet to that of Moses.

G.

NUMBER 34.

Of Fasting. Part 2.

In my 27th paper, I have made a dissertation upon fasting: In this I shall continue it.

Monsieur de Fontenelle, in his history of oracles, tells us, from Philostratus, that the oracle of Amphiaraus in Attica, delivered its answers in dreams; and that those who consulted it, must first fast well, in order to dream well; but when fasting failed to produce a phrenzy of brain, and by it the meaning of the God, who had no other way of ascending into the head, but upon the fumes arising from empty bowels; then the priest helped his master to bring forth a dream, by wrapping up the devout querist in the skins of victims, which being rubbed and impregnated with intoxicating drugs, disposed him to dream most divinely, and filled his noddle with very hopeful prophecy. This satisfied the believing querist, saved the credit of the god, and brought pretty offerings to his vicar.

Such use did the Pagan priests make of the duty of fasting; and that the Romish priests have perverted it to as wicked and deceitful purposes, I have shewn in another paper. It is agreeable to their cunning and their avarice, to make the people poor and mad; and it must be owned a pretty priestly art, that of driving men out of their estates and their understandings with their own consent; and leading them into a belief, that starving is a duty, and lunacy is grace.

By the law of nature, we are not obliged to fast at all, unless in the way of physick, when we are ill, through an over-fullness of the vessels or any other disorder, which may be removed or lessened by abstinence. In this case we ought to fast for our health sake; and whatever is necessary for self-relief, or self-preservation, becomes also a duty and a piece of natural religion, when it does not contradict a positive law of God. But to abstain, upon certain days, from the comfortable use of God's good creatures, which ought to be received with thankfulness, out of a vain pretence to please him, or to promote our cultivation, is a strange and barbarous chimæra, which the law of nature abhors; and can be the effect of nothing but distraction in the people, or craft in the priests. We might as rationally imagine, that gales were sent at certain severe seasons of the year, would drive us north or south; and that the afflicting our skins with frost and snow, would be great service to our shivering souls; and that though self-preservation be an essential law of nature, yet self-destruction is also an essential law of nature.

Fasting, therefore, being no part of the law of nature, the Jewish law of ceremonies, which is abolished, cannot make it a duty: And of the examples of fasting, taken from the prophet Daniel, and other persons of the old testament; they were either voluntary, such as men may perform when he is in a fasting humour, which no body presumes to restrain; or they were the effect of sorrow, when grief had destroyed our appetite, and then there was no devotion in them; or they were either

dinary and supernatural, and being inimitable, cannot be necessary. Miraculous fasting cannot be a duty, where the gift of miracles is not given.

As to the new testament, there is not a stated fast appointed in it : We are indeed commanded to fast and pray ; but we are no where told how much, or how often, we are to do either ; but are left to choose proper occasions, and proper inclinations, for doing both. St. Paul is such a generous advocate for liberty of this kind, that he condemns all those who condemn others for taking it. Let not, says he, him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth ; for God hath received him. One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. (Rom. ch. xiv. ver. 3, and 5.) The same spirit of charity, and the same good-natured rational advice, runs through the whole chapter.

The institution of lent was founded upon our Saviour's fast of forty days in the wilderness ; as if weak impotent mortals could imitate the omnipotent Son of God, in works done by divine power only ! They might as well pretend to walk upon the sea once a year, or to raise the dead at all times : Besides, our Saviour performed this fast but once, and his apostles never, as far as we know. Once a twelve month you must keep lent, is not a gospel precept.

No society, therefore, of men can enjoin any time, or measure, of fasting (except where the law directs the same) without departing from the gospel, contradicting St. Paul, and setting up their own authority in defiance of both the gospel and the saint. Such an injunction would be impracticable, and even cruel. To many constitutions it might be dangerous, and even fatal ; and to all men, it would render life wretched and burthensome. The good God has no where commanded frail men to worship him with pain and sickness of body, nor to hasten their own death by the means of their devotion. This would be to represent him as delighting in human misery, and human sacrifices ; a sort of worship suitable to the terrible spirit of moloch, or any other demon but no wise acceptable to the God of mercy, and the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Popish priests know well, that it is entirely impossible that all men should comply with this their discipline of hunger : and perhaps that very impossibility is their best reason for maintaining it. It is certain that from hence they draw vast gain, by hiring out dispensations for eating on the days of fasting : and the lucre which they make by breaking the canon, is an unanswerable argument for defending it. No man is denied the privilege of breaking lent, who can pay for breaking it. He who cannot fast at all, may, for a competent fee, eat fish, which is a more luxuriant diet than flesh ; and he who cannot fast upon fish, may, for a more competent fee, fast upon a belly-full of roast-beef ; which, though a chaster sort of food than fish, is more strictly forbidden by that church.

Indeed, such are the vast fees arising to the Popish church, from licences for a liberty to eat, when it is a duty to fast, that the whole institution of fasting there, seems only a religious roguery, designed for starving the people, to feed the priests. For myself, I think the parson has so little to do with this matter, that I do not think, that any di-

rection ought to be taken about fasting, but from our constitution, or our physician. If it be our duty to fast on certain days, no tribe of priests can dispense with the pleasure and the laws of Almighty God ; though it is a task which (for money) they never refuse : And if it be not our duty, it is insolent and wicked in them to command what neither God nor nature requires ; and it is in us a sin and a folly to obey them. Even the protestant priests, long since the reformation, have known how to make the right use of this power. I myself have seen several formal dispensations, signed by arch-bishop Sheldon, under the archi-episcopal seal, to license the eating of flesh in lent ; which dispensations, I presume, were not granted without application and fees.

Religion is a voluntary thing ; it can no more be forced than reason, or memory, or any faculty of the soul. To be devout against our will, is an absurdity ; and it is ridiculous in others to hope to make us so, in spite of ourselves. We have no power over the appetites of others, no more than over their consciences. Neither a man's mind, nor his palate, can be subject to the jurisdiction of another ; and whoever takes upon him to regulate one's throat and stomach, and direct one how much to swallow, may (with equal reason) assume dominion over the other offices of nature, and dictate how much one ought to discharge. If fasting be good and pious, because it afflicts and mortifies the human spirit and frame ; a surfeit, or a debauch, or a kick on the guts, or a broken leg, must be good and pious, for the same reason, if given or taken with the same view.

As fasting ought to be left to every man's discretion, because every man is the best judge of his constitution and his conscience, so ought it to be exercised with exceeding care and caution ; otherwise it will be apt to sour our tempers, or disorder our heads, and probably do both. Now, neither ill-nature, nor enthusiasm, is in any wise related to true religion ; far otherwise, they are the greatest enemies which it has. A bitter spirit, and a raving brain, may be occasioned or increased by fasting ; but Christianity neither produces them, nor owns them. We may fast ourselves into peevishness, and call it Christian zeal ; and into the vapours, and call the wind in our heads inspiration : But, by all this, we only shew that we know nothing, at least possess nothing, either of inspiration or zeal.

But this same immoderate fasting does not only render people whimsical and passionate, and has consequently helped to give birth to many ridiculous and uncharitable principles of divinity, which have infatuated and enflamed mankind ; but it also creates narrow thoughts, and an abject poorness of spirit ; and renders the mind prone to delusion and slavery. It is manifest, that a moderate use of the blessings and enjoyments of life, of which eating and drinking are not the least has a wonderful tendency to create or improve a good and beneficent disposition of the heart ; which in my opinion, is as absolutely necessary to devotion, as to good neighbourhood. I can never think that ill-nature, or baseness of mind, can be an acceptable oblation to the wise and merciful God ; or that religion should command what common sense forbids. I must own, I am always best pleased after a good meal, and therefore best disposed to love God and my neighbour, which is the sum of both tables ; I feel at the same juncture, the love of liberty, and the spirit of wiggism, strongest in me. And if eating and drinking

makes us thus bold for our constitution, let us, we beseech you, in the name of publick spirit, promote moderate eating and drinking.

It is a principle in politicks, that a happy people will never bear a tyrannical prince: He must therefore make his subjects wretched, before he can make himself absolute. And this principle holds equally true, in the business of church dominion. The laity must be fools, before they can think the priests to be oracles; and they must be slaves, before they can think the priests to be Lords. Here then is an unanswerable reason, taken from the standing rules of ecclesiastical polity why the lay-beasts of the people, as Mr. Lesley kindly calls us, should be always kept senseless, always starving. I would therefore entreat all my loving countrymen, that, as they love their liberty and the protestant religion, they would love their victuals. G.

NUMBER 35.

Of Reason.

REASON is the only guide given to men in the state of nature, to find out the will of God, and the means of self-preservation. The senses are its subordinate instruments and spies; they bring it intelligence; and it forms a judgment, and takes measures, according to the discoveries which they make. It compares things one with another, and chooses them, if they are good; or neglects them, if they are indifferent; or shuns them if they are bad. It discovers a first cause, the maker, contriver, and preserver of all things; and therefore it teaches submission to his will, admiration of his wisdom and power and thankfulness for his goodness and mercy. It distinguishes subjects from slaves; and shews the loveliness of liberty, and the vileness of vassalage; it shews that, as to political privileges, all men are born equal; and consequently, that he who is no better than others, can have a right to command others, who are as good as himself; unless for the ends of their own interest and safety, they confer that right upon him, during their good pleasure, or his good behaviour.

Reason has invented all science, pointed out all commerce, and framed all schemes for social happiness. It has polished mankind, set the Greeks above the barbarians, and the Romans above the Greeks. It has been observed, in praise of its great power and excellency, by a celebrated moralist, that we have not sufficient strength to follow our reason as far as it would carry us.

To reason we are beholden for all the comforts and conveniencies of life, next after the first authour of them; and for our defence against the assaults of beasts of prey, and of one another; and for our shelter from the inclemencies of uncertain weather, freezing us, or scorching us, according to the different seasons of the year. The earth, with all its abundance affords but rude and displeasing entertainment, without the dexterity and refinements of reason. Thus, even the gifts of na-

ture, before they arrive at us, and are made fit for our use, become also the gifts of reason. Without reason, we had lived like the brute creation, upon raw fruit, tasteless herbs, and the cold spring ; or exposed to the merciless jaws of famine, when a severe winter had frozen up the stores of the earth, and locked the waters under ice.

Reason checks tumultuous passion, the greatest enemy to the peace of the mind, and to the peace of society. Hence it has been observed, by the same moralist, that all our rational pursuits are temperate pursuits ; and that what we pursue with reason, we never pursue with violence. Reason subdues anger, and prevents cruelty ; it makes a man less fierce than a lion, and less ravenous than a bear. It is not human shape, but human reason, that places a man above the beasts of the field, and lifts him into a resemblance with God himself. Hence it is justly stiled *divinæ particula auræ* ; a ray, or impulse of the divinity. And, in what sense can a man be said to be made after the image of God, unless by his possessing that reason, which is a divine particle of the Godhead ? We resemble not our Maker in person or complexion ; and therefore can only resemble him in reason, and in mercy, which is the child of this divine reason.

Were we not rational creatures, we could not be religious creatures, but upon a level with brutes, to whom God has made no revelation of himself, because they want reason to discern it, and to thank him for it. Revelation therefore presupposes reason ; and addresses itself to reason ; and God himself, by persuading us, as he does in his word, by the voice of reason, appeals to our reason. We cannot glorify God but with our understandings ; and we are convinced of his goodness before we adore it. To praise him, without reason, is a contradiction, and an impossibility. The devotion which he requires must be free, rational and willing ; and where it is not so, it is folly or hypocrisy.

Nor is there any opposition between reason and grace, whatever some may weakly or dishonestly, maintain. In truth, grace is never given, but where reason was already given ; and the former cannot subsist, where the latter does not. We may have worldly wisdom without piety ; but cannot possess piety without understanding ; nor does grace, though given in the greatest abundance, at all supply the ordinary offices of reason. We do not find that St. Luke was a better physician, for having written a gospel ; or St. Paul a better sailor, or better tent-maker, for being an apostle. But neither could St. Luke have been an evangelist, nor St. Paul an apostle, unless God had given them reason as well as grace. Indeed they are both the gifts of God ; only the one is ordinary, and the other is extraordinary.

Reason, even without the light of revelation, teaches us to investigate nature, and praise God for the wonderfulness of his works. It must judge of revelation itself, what is so, and what not ; and of the words and language, in which the holy oracles were at first conveyed ; and of the words and language into which they were afterwards translated. New words, many of them, being obscure or equivocal, and signifying different things to different men, it is left to our reason to determine, in what sense these words are to be understood. The spirit of God has invented for us no new ones, or such as carry in their sound certain and determinate ideas, which cannot be mistaken, but must infallibly be the same to every man.

By the light of reason, we see about us. It warms us with craft, and arms us against force ; and the same reason, which commands us to believe in God implicitly, and obey him passively, does also command us to trust to no man without inquiry, and to submit to no man without cause. Thus, what is our duty in relation to God, would be madness in relation to one another : the good God cannot deceive us ; but men who have pride, folly, interest and complexion, all conspiring to deceive themselves and others.

Our first attempt to make converts, is an appeal to their reason, by which they are to judge for themselves of the reasonableness of our religion, and of the arguments which we bring for the defence and recommendation of our religion : which method would be exceedingly absurd and dishonest, if we did not suffer them to judge of our religion with the same freedom, after they are come into it, as they did before they embraced it. This would be trepanning one's reason into captivity, with its own assistance ; first to make use of it, and then to vote it useless : a strange inconsistent piece of treachery, and a flat contradiction to that liberty with which Christ has made us free ! As if we were to receive any system upon the grounds of reason, without which it never can be sincerely received, and then to reject our reason upon the grounds of our system !

Pray, how do we distinguish the beauty and truth of the gospel, from the imposture and absurdity of the alcoran, but by our reason ? How do we detect the impudent and senseless doctrine of transubstantiation, but by our sense and reason ? Why did we, or how could we, leave popery, and embrace the reformation, but because our own private reason told us ; and scripture, of which we made ourselves the judges, told us ; that we left slavery, falsehood, and cruelty, for truth, freedom and innocence ? How did our Saviour prove himself the son of God, but by miracles, which every eye saw, and every ear heard ? He appealed to the sense and reason of mankind ; and all were convinced. How do we know the scripture to be the word of God, but by the deductions and information of reason ? How can we prove our own church, as by law established, to be the purest and best constituted church in the world, but by the testimony of impartial, disinterested reason ? For, it is plain, from the great number of gain-sayers, and arians, that her genuine sons have not the miraculous gift of inspiring, from above, all men with their own orthodox sentiments. How can we distinguish religion from enthusiasm ; grace from superstition : faith from credulity ; the love of the church from the love of power ; and the authority of God from the impositions of men ; but by reason, or by the scripture, interpreted by reason ?

In short, all who are friends to truth, are friends to reason, the discoverer and champion of truth ; and none are foes to reason, but those who have truth and reason for their foes. He, who has dark purposes to serve, must use dark means : light would discover him, and reason expose him : he must endeavour to shut out both ; and make them look frightful, by giving them ill names ; for farther than names the vulgar inquire not.

From this cause, religion and liberty flourish, where reason and knowledge are encouraged ; and wherever the latter are stifled, the former are extinguished. In Turkey, printing is forbid, enquiry is

dangerous, and free-speaking is capital ; because they are all inconsistent with the Mahometanism by law established. Hence it comes to pass, that the wretched Turks are all stupidly ignorant, are all slaves, all infidels. Nor have the papists much advantage to boast above the Mahometans. Their guides and governours lock up from them the scripture, which is the book of knowledge : they teach them, that ignorance is the mother of devotion : they banish liberty, they brow-beat reason, they persecute truth. In consequence of all which, the deluded votaries of the Romish church are ignorant as the Mahometans, as great slaves, greater idolaters, and greater persecutors ; that is, in barbarity they exceed the Turks, who in barbarity exceed most others.

Here, in England, why are we so free, why protestants ; but because we are guided by reason, and judge for ourselves ? And none amongst us complain of the liberty of the press, or the growth of free-thinking, but those who would found a dominion upon stupidity and persecution. Vile and woful is that cause, which must be supported by ignorance and misery ! And yet there are those in Great-Britain, who, though they wear a holy and venerable livery, yet have the boldness and blasphemy to christen that impious cause, the cause of God and of his church.

To conclude ; scripture, and reason, without which scripture can have no effect, are the only tests of every falsehood and imposture, and every superstition. Suppose, for example, a reverend doctor is touched with an odd zeal for bowing to the east ; he ought to convince my reason that bowing to the east is enjoined in scripture, before he enjoins me to bow also. If he say, that it is enjoined by the authority of the church ; he then must satisfy my reason, that the scripture teaches the church to teach her members to make bows. If he answer, that neither does the scripture teach to bow to the east, but that the church thinks bowing decent and edifying ; he must then prove, by rational evidence, that what every church thinks decent is a duty. If he reply, that this is only true of the one orthodox church ; then he must prove that his church is the sole orthodox church, according to the rules of the gospel. And if the doctor cannot do this to my satisfaction, then there will be an end of his argument for his ecclesiastical bowings.

As we must judge from scripture what is orthodoxy ; so we must judge from reason, what is scripture.

G.

NUMBER 36.

Of the Peace of the Church.

It is a shameful insult upon our understandings, that of sanctifying the most wicked purposes and most cruel actions with the most honest and innocent names ; and yet nothing is more frequently practised.

Thus the worthy name of ruler shall be prostituted and pronounced aloud, to palliate and even to justify the barbarities of a tyrant ; and that peaceable word obedience shall be forced to signify an unmanly and unnatural patience of servitude. Laws, which were intended to protect and encourage good men, and to restrain and punish ill ones, are often perverted into deadly instruments in the hands of robbers and usurpers, against the virtuous and the harmless ; and the means of preservation are turned into engines of destruction. The Lord's anointed, a phrase which at first signified only a man approved and chosen by God himself to be the ruler of his people, has been since wrested to mean an over-grown plunderer, who chose himself to be a destroyer of God's people.

These are some instances of the abuse of words in civil life. In religion, the abuse has been, if possible, still greater ; of which I have given already many proofs, and shall continue to give more in the course of these papers. I shall at present confine myself to a phrase, which is indeed a very good one, but which I have never known applied to a good purpose in my time, nor at any time before ; I mean, that of the peace of the church.

By the peace of the church, when it is taken in a rational and warrantable sense, I take to be meant no more than this ; namely, that any number of people, who have agreed among themselves upon terms of religious communion, shall quietly enjoy the sacred privilege of meeting together to worship God ; and whoever disturbs them, let his title or pretensions be what they will, is a breaker of the peace of the church. Or if any other society greater than the former, and of longer standing, think fit to be provoked at this religious indulgence, and call it a breach of the peace of the church, they bring home the charge upon themselves ; who, by breaking the peace of the church, mean only the not submitting to their own proud spirit, which finds peace only in the exercise of successful tyranny. Or if the smaller society should usurp dominion over the thoughts of its own members, and demand of them a belief contrary to the light of their minds, or a behaviour contrary to the dictates and conviction of their consciences ; they justify the claims of the greater society over themselves, and leave themselves without excuse for having left it.

A man, who leaves the communion of any particular church, does no more break the peace of that church, than a man who leaves the realm, breaks the peace of the realm ; or than a man breaks the peace of a family, who, whilst the rest dine upon flesh, does himself dine separately upon fish. But he does evidently break the peace of the church, who would by violence keep any one in that church ; forasmuch, as by so doing, he violates conscience, which is the seat and centre of religion, there being no religion where there is no conscience, and consequently no real church. He who prays without book, does not break the peace of the church, provided he forces no body to pray as he prays : But he who would compel others to pray by his pattern, against their own liking, does not only break the peace of the church, but destroys, as far as he can, its very essence ; because a church is constituted by the voluntary devotion performed by two or three met together in Christ's name. If it be not voluntary, it is no devotion ; God will be worshipped *in spirit and in truth* : And if it be voluntary, no man can controul it.

Hitherto, for the most part, the peace of the church has been unnaturally made to signify a blind submission to the dictates of priests in matters of devotion; and a blind acceptance of all their schemes, dreams and forgeries in matters of faith. Now here is no church at all; but on one hand, the invention and imposition of deceitful and tyrannical men, defacing and misrepresenting religion, and wresting it to serve their own wicked purposes; and, on the other hand, a tribe of fools and slaves, sacrificing their senses, their freedom, and their consciences to antichrist, and worshipping him, and not God. If one of these grovelling bigots resume his eyes, and break his fetters, he forsooth, is a schismatick, he breaks the peace of the church.

Why will these men so famed for being close and crafty, be so plainly shewing us, that by the church they mean only themselves; and by the worship of God, they mean only the worship of their own persons and authority? But they make this manifest, as by a thousand instances, so particularly by this; namely, that the greatest rebel to God shall find good quarter, provided he be but a good subject to them; and the most conscientious servant of the living God shall find no mercy, if he dispute to bend to their usurpations, and to swallow their inventions for divine oracles. It is no matter whether you live like a Christian or no, provided you do not break the peace of the church; but if you do, your being a saint will not atone for it, nor stand you in the least stead.

If I do all I can to please God, I shall certainly please him. Now, if the clergy had the same view and design, my pleasing God would also please them. In consequence of this, if I thought my abode and communion with them a sin, it is their duty to encourage and exhort me to leave them, and to obey God rather than men. But far from this, the plea of pleasing God is often no way of pleasing them; and they seldom fail to damn a man for those very actions, by which, through Christ, he shall be saved; namely, deserting authority for conscience, and finding out the truth for himself.

A stupid servitude to unbounded dominion, supports the peace of the church in some countries, just as ignorance, poverty, and many dragoons do the peace of the state in others.

The breaking of the peace of the church, as the same is generally understood by the ignorant people, and always by the ambitious clergy, is both a rational and a religious duty, and the best action which a man can perform. That man must be as void of reason as of religion, who quarrels with me for having different faculties from him, and a different way of conceiving things. He might with as much propriety quarrel with me for having a different complexion, and a different palate, neither of which is in my own power.

If I christen my child without the sign of the cross, or a human form of words; how do I, by this, break the peace of the church or of good neighbourhood? But he, who oppresses or calumniates me for thus doing my duty, by discharging my conscience, commits an outrage both upon humanity and conscience; and not only breaks the peace of the church and of society, but by his want of charity declares his want of Christianity.

If I follow the best light which I can get, I do my duty; and if I do my duty, I please God. And who shall dare to tell me, that though I please God, yet I break the peace of the church? Would not this be to

own, that the will of God and the will of the church are opposite things?

I do not believe that there are upon earth two men who think exactly alike upon every subject; and yet our different tastes in meat, drink, building, and dress, make not the least difference in human society; nor is it likely that they ever will, unless we establish by law, and tack preferments to one particular mode of eating, drinking, building, and dressing; then indeed we may soon expect to see the established and orthodox mason, cook and taylor, very zealous and loud for conformity and penalties. But at present, ten men in ten different suits, can dine together upon ten different dishes, and give ten different opinions upon one piece of painting of architecture, without breaking friendship or good humour. If indeed they be drunk either with wine or zeal, they will be apt to fight about the church or something else: But why men in their senses should clamour and quarrel at their neighbour's particular conscience, any more than at his particular palate, no reason can be assigned, but the delusions of priestcraft operating upon its genuine issue, bigotry. Is not conscience dearer to a man than his palate or his fancy in clothes? God can receive no worship that comes not from the conscience; and he who commands you to follow him against your conscience, commands you in effect to provoke God out of complaisance to man; and rather than do this, I hope it is lawful to break the peace of the church. Where the church quadrates with a man's conscience, he will of course comply with the church; but where it does not, he is in conscience bound to desert it: otherwise to be a conformist, he must be a hypocrite.

Can these men be Christians, who demand submission to their dictates, in opposition to the dictates of conscience, and at the peril of salvation; and who, provided you obey them, care not though you mock God? But if they will allow *every man to be fully persuaded in his own mind*, which is the Apostle's rule and precept, then the cry of breaking the peace of the church, is an empty knavish cry.

Independent things in religion there are none; and therefore the pretended power of the ecclesiasticks to impose them, is wicked and ridiculous. If they be indifferent in their own eyes, why are they imposed? And if they were indifferent in the eyes of others, no body would refuse them. But if I dislike them, they are no longer indifferent to me; and if you lay any stress upon them, they are no longer indifferent to you. But to oppress, imprison, and ruin people for things allowed to be indifferent, is such a piece of impudence, and wanton cruelty, as cannot be described.

To call any thing indifferent in religion, is to own that it has nothing to do with religion. Now, can any reason be given why religion should be interested in that, in which religion has no interest. Sure these men mock us, and would seem to be in jest, did not their proceedings, when they have power, shew them to be terribly in earnest.

If I neglect a ceremony or a cringe, which I think a reproach to religion and reason; do I break the peace of the church, for thus doing honour to religion and reason? Or is it not rather an insult upon both, and a manifest breach of charity, to use me ill for acting upon such righteous and laudable motives? Do I break the peace of the church, in worshipping God after a manner that I am verily persuaded he will accept? Or do I not rather dishonour him, in using that as worship

which my mind tells me is no worship, though it should be established by law ?

In popish and Mahometan countries, you see neither true religion nor the practice of it ; and yet the peace of the church there is wonderfully well secured by great armies and capital penalties. Fire and sword, halters and dungeons, are all employed to protect the peace of the church. And in every nation under the sun, where the church enjoys the most profound peace, the people enjoy the most profound misery, ignorance and slavery. Civil and religious liberty are certain signs of each other, and live and die together ; but, I believe I may lay it down for a maxim, that in any country where there is never a separatist from the church, there is never a freeman in the state. To which maxim I may venture to add another, namely, that in the ecclesiastical style, the peace of the church is but another phrase for the power of the priests.

NUMBER 37.

The Enmity of the High Clergy to the Bible.

We can never sufficiently admire and adore the infinite goodness of God to mankind, in giving him a perfect rule or law for his direction and conduct ; and delivering it in books and scriptures, which are plain and easy in all things necessary to be known to every one, who shall make a proper use of his natural faculties, and not weakly trust a pope, or some body like a pope, for their interpretation, who will ever have ambitious or other worldly purposes to serve, by imposing false and wicked meanings on those sacred writings.

How ought we then to value our bibles, daily to read them, and search ourselves for those treasures of wisdom and knowledge ; and how jealous should we be of trusting our temporal and eternal happiness to the judgment and conduct of others, who, for the most part, from imbibed prejudices or worse designs, represent the most ridiculous, chimerical, absurd, contradictory and immoral opinions, to be fundamental articles of Christianity !

Notwithstanding, such is the power and crafty malice of the popish and popishly-affected clergy, that in most countries they have either taken the bible (even on the pretence of religion itself) out of the peoples hands, or have made it useless there ; and such is the senseless stupidity of the gaping herd, that they observe not the injury done them, and not only suffer this worst sort of robbery, violence, and injustice, but kiss the rod, and esteem themselves to be kindly and religiously dealt with.

In all popish countries, before the reformation, the bible was locked up in the learned languages ; which effectually hindered the people from being acquainted with that holy book ; the priest saying, and the poor ignorant laity believing, that it was heretical, and the very foundation of all heresy and schism, for the people to read the bible. In-

deed, after the reformation, some translations were made of it into the vulgar languages of particular popish countries ; but were the people ever the better for it ? No such matter, I can assure you ; for no one was suffered to read those translations without a special licence, which was dangerous to ask for, and rendered a man suspected of heretical pravity ; and the priest never granted it but to those, who either would not or could not make any use of it ; that is, to such as he well knew were pre-engaged by strong prejudices, or stronger interests, to favour the sacerdotal power, and who durst not understand the word of God differently from the clergy, who called themselves the church.

But in other popish countries, and particularly in Spain, the bible is not extant in the vulgar tongue, and consequently must be unknown altogether to the people, who are incapable of reading it even by licence ; which can scarcely be called a privilege lost, considering how few durst ask, or can get licences, who they are that can obtain them, and what danger they would incur in making a right use of them.

Especial care is taken to prevent the importation of any translation of the bible in these countries ; and no sooner does any ship of a protestant nation come to anchor in any popish port, where the inquisition prevails, but she is visited and searched narrowly for heretical books, and particularly for bibles, by the officers of that court, which are immediately carried to the inquisition, and there burned.

The brave old marshal Schomberg, when he was last at Lisbon, told a friend of mine, with tears in his eyes, that having, when he came ashore there, left a Dutch bible, (which had been his grandfather's) upon the table of his cabin, it had been carried from the custom-house to the inquisition ; and that though he had sent to the chief inquisitor, and had spoke to him himself for it, he had not been able to recover it.

Let us now approach nearer home, and see how protestants are used in respect to reading the bible. And in order to consider this matter, I shall premise two things. First, that the end and design of reading the bible, is to find out the will of God, or the meaning which God holds forth to us therein, that we may regulate our belief and form our practice thereby. And, secondly, I premise, that to such reading the bible it is requisite that we should not be prejudiced by education, in behalf of any fancies ; that we should pay no regard to the authority of weak and fallible men ; that no opinions should be imposed on us as Christian opinions ; as, for example, consubstantiation, predestination, the peculiar opinions of Arius, or Socinus, and other doctrines, pretended to be derived from the word of God ; and that no man should be hurt in his body, name or goods, for understanding the bible in that sense which he thinks to have been intended by God, but that we should act, and be permitted to act, in this matter, as we do in understanding any other book : for if such arts, and crafts, and force are used to make men understand the bible in the Lutheran, Presbyterian, or Socinian sense, as form mens minds so strongly to those senses, that not a man in the countries, where any of those opinions prevail, does, or dares differ from the sentiments of the publick, or hurts himself by so doing ; that man is not properly allowed to read the bible, or to take his religion from thence, but receives his religion from his Luthe-

ran, or presbyterian, or socinian priest, and might as well take his religion from a popish priest, without using any bible at all. For what is the difference between taking a popish priest's word for the sense of the bible, about the infallibility and authority of the pope and the church, or the doctrine of transubstantiation, (which bible the priest keeps solely in his own hands,) and taking a presbyter's word, or being influenced by him, as to the sense of the bible, in respect to the doctrines of the divine right of presbyters and predestination? (which bible he does for forms sake, put into the laymen's hand, but keeps the sense in his own.) If there be any material difference, it is in this, that the popish priest acts a fair, open, and consistent part, in denying the use of the bible; and that the presbyter does the same thing hypocritically; and that the presbyterian layman makes a more shameful and contradictory submission to his presbyter, than a popish layman does to his priest.

When the minds of the youth, and their passions, are thus engaged in behalf of certain human compositions; when they are taught to reverence men, who are hired and paid to maintain those compositions; are bred up to hate the persons of men of other persuasions, to abhor their doctrines, and think it matter of just disgrace to change the principles of their education; and when all this is taught as the dictates of the holy scriptures; must they not, under these prejudices, read the scriptures without understanding them? Is not that impartiality, which is necessary towards finding out the true sense of a book, entirely taken away? And is not a partiality, which must lead men to mistake the sense of a book, introduced?

But even this is nothing to what those must go through, if they dare to understand the bible differently from what is vulgarly understood in the country where they live. They will be deemed hereticks, which is "supposed to include every thing that is bad in it. It makes every thing appear odious and deformed; dissolves all friendships, and extinguishes all former kind sentiments, however just and well deserved. And from the time that a man is deemed an heretick, it is charity to act against all rules of charity. And the more men violate the laws of God in dealing with him, it is in their opinion, doing God greater service."* And besides being thus put into a bear-skin, and made a scare-crow; what is called heresy, undoes men in their trades and callings, subjects to them to ecclesiastical and civil prosecutions, and deprives them of all preferments in the church or state. Whereas a person who understands the bible, as he is led by the nose to understand it, which is for the most part falsely, has not only fair quarter and reputation, and all manner of preferments in church and state attending him; but may be as lewd as he pleases, provided he have a sufficient portion of zeal for his orthodoxy, or rather for the orthodox priest.

Is it not therefore a mere mock-show, to recommend to men the reading of the scriptures; if, when they read them, they must under-

* See a pamphlet entitled, the difficulties and discouragements which attend the study of the scriptures, in the way of private judgment. A pamphlet generally ascribed to Dr. Francis Hare, formerly dean of Worcester, and now bishop of St. Asaph, and dean of St. Paul's.

stand them just as their master, the priest, tells them, under the penalties of all the foregoing inconveniences, and the foregoing rewards which the priest, by his power and influence, bestows? Bishop Bramhall tells us plainly, (and to many of our modern divines agree with him) that “the promiscuous licence which protestants give to all sorts to read and interpret the scripture, is more prejudicial, nay, pernicious, than the over-rigorous restraint of the Romanists.” This is protestant priestcraft with a witness! For, as Mr. Chillingworth most judiciously observes, “he that would usurp an absolute lordship and tyranny over any people, need not put himself to the trouble and difficulty of abrogating and disannulling the laws made to maintain the common liberty, or of locking them up in an unknown tongue from the people; for he may compass his own design as well, if he can get the power and authority to interpret them as he pleases; if he can rule his people by his laws, and his laws by his lawyers. Nay, the more expedite, and therefore the more likely way to be successful, is to gain the opinion and esteem of the publick and authorized interpreter of them.” For by this means he presses the laws into his service, to advance his designs; and can, in accommodation to the opinion which men have of the excellency of the laws contained in the scriptures, with a sort of grace, put a crown on their head, and a reed in their hands, and bow before them, and cry, hail, king of the Jews! and pretend a great deal of esteem, respect, and reverence to them, while he is in a more effectual manner misleading the people about their meaning, than if he destroyed the scriptures themselves, or locked them up in an unknown tongue from the people. C.

NUMBER 38.

Of Penance and Religious Revellings.

I HAVE, in two former papers, considered the nature, use, and consequences of religious fastings. I shall, in this, enquire a little into the merits of penance, and the devotion of festivals; a couple of potent engines in the hands of churchmen.

Joy and sorrow proceeding, as they do, from certain causes which necessarily produce them; the one troubles the imagination, and the other delights it, whether we will or no. They are different names given to different operations of the animal spirits, which bring to God Almighty no voluntary worship, and consequently no worship at all. The same disorder in the blood or nerves, which discovers itself in sighs and groans, would, in a greater degree, bring forth rage and convulsions, which are not the symptoms of a gospel-spirit, but rather the marks of spirits dispossessed in the gospel. People under trouble, or in the spleen, are too apt to mistake their bodily or mental disorders for the workings of divine grace; as if the wise and mild spirit of God delighted to play childish and mischievous pranks with weak and un-

happy men, by filling them with wild freaks or cruel agonies. I doubt there are few of these sort of people, who can give a reason why the great God should be better pleased with a sorrowful heart, than an aching head.

If God Almighty be pleased with our afflicting ourselves, he must be pleased best when we afflict ourselves most ; and a greater degree of suffering must beget a greater portion of his favour : And consequently, the cutting ourselves with knives, as did the priests of Baal, must be more acceptable to him, than the bare whipping ourselves with rods, as do the priests of Rome, &c. By the same rule, if the endangering of one's life be well pleasing to him, the destroying of one's life must be more pleasing to him ; and despair and self-murder are more grateful instances of duty and devotion to the God of mercy, than barely being afraid of him, and barely making our lives miserable. The pious consequence of all which must be, that the blessed and benificent God, who is the giver of all good, is the authour of all evil and all misery ; and the maker and preserver of mankind, who is the Father of mercies, is also the destroyer of mankind, and the father of cruelties.

Nor is this reasoning so strange, or these conclusions so unnatural, as some may ignorantly imagine ; since the priests, who, for the godly ends of dominion and gain, were the first inventors of sacrifices and penances, have frequently proceeded so far in their inhuman and diabolical craft, as to butcher men to appease their deity. And indeed, when once you had taken their word for the divine will, you renounced all right and pretence to judge for yourself, or to dispute any measure of devotion which they had thought fit to prescribe. Thus, for example, if the priests told you, that their God graciously longed for a bonfire, and had in his divine goodness, appointed you to be the principal faggot ; as averse as your carnal spirit might be to this great honour, yet you could not decline it, without the terrible imputation of disobedience, or apostacy, and probably of atheism : for, having given the priest the property of your body, your thoughts and your behaviour, you were become all the priest's.

The duty of penance is, according to certain churchmen, a very necessary duty : but there is another duty quite opposite to it, yet very necessary also ; and that is, the business and duty of festivals. These two may indeed seem contradictions to each other, and to the eye of unsanctified reason are so ; but where they are enjoined by church-authority, it is our duty to think them orthodox and consistent, and so to be merry or melancholy, and to weep or laugh, just as mother-church commands us, in defiance of our constitutions and our understandings. We are to mourn on good-friday, because on that day our Saviour died ; though, if he had not, we could not have been saved : and we are to take our belly full of meat and mirth on easter-sunday, because Christ rose on that day from the dead ; though it was impossible for him to have continued there.

Penance is a ghostly punishment imposed by a priest, or voluntarily suffered by a penitent, for some offence real or imagined. Sometimes it consists in abstinence from certain meats, which it seems, are not so much in favour with Almighty God, as are others : a piece of cod, for example, with rich sauce, is less savoury in God's sight, than a plain piece of beef and cabbage, and a greater atonement for sin. Some-

times it is performed by change of apparel ; and a dirty hair-cloth is more pious and meritorious, than a clean holland shirt. Sometimes it is performed by rambling to some church, to stare at a wooden saint, and kiss an old coffin. Sometimes this holy severity rests altogether upon your pocket, and God's wrath is fervently and successfully bribed away by the prevailing intercession of some potent pieces to his priest, who will infallibly persuade him to overlook your guilt, and be good friends with you. Sometimes you are to scarify your back-side for the healing of your soul, and reconcile yourself to heaven by the dint of lashing ; which will sometimes serve for another purpose ; and so a scourge made of broom, is made the scourge of God. But, if drawing blood on this occasion be so pious, because so painful, I do not see why the drawing of a tooth would not do as well ; or why the Omnipotent would not be as propitious to desolate gums, as to blistered loins ?

So much for praising God by being sorrowful ; in which case, sickness and pain are great blessings.. Now for the method of pleasing him, by being joyful ; in which case, festivity and merriment are great blessings too ! So that, we see, the Almighty is highly pleased with both our misery and our happiness.

Worldly blessings are, no doubt, the gifts of God, and we ought to receive them with joyful hands and grateful hearts ; and religion, and philosophy too, teaches us to submit to afflictions and calamities with patience and humility, and to consider them either as effects of our own intemperance and folly, as the necessary and inevitable concomitants of human nature, or the strokes of Providence intended for our correction and amendment ; nor do I deny that it may be sometimes lawful and expedient too, mechanically to prepare our minds with dispositions suitable to the actions which they are to produce.

Every one's experience shews him, that his mind and body operate upon one another : both are improved by exercise and moderate food, raised and exhilarated by musick or diversion, enervated with sickness, oppressed with drunkenness and gluttony, fatigued with labour ; and often all the noble faculties of the former are quite destroyed and extinguished by distemper and accidents.

It may be therefore not only lawful, but our duty, by proper food, agreeable conversation, and due exercise, to prepare and keep ourselves in such a temperament, as may best qualify us for cool reflection, and enable us in the best manner to exert our faculties : but from what principle of reason or religion do we find, that we must work up our passions beyond their natural pitch, and endeavour to destroy the serenity and calm of our minds, to do homage to the deity ? who will accept no service but what flows from a sincere and upright heart, elevated and raised by a due contemplation of the divine perfections, and the benefits received from our great Creator, or humbled by the consideration of human infirmities ; and not intoxicated with various musick, pompous shews, delicious banquets, or bottles of brandy ; nor depressed or sunk with mortifications, penances, fasting, or unwholesome diet ; all which have nothing to do with true religion, though they have been always essential parts of every false one.

Let us now see what sort of devotion these holy days produce.

Idleness is the nurse of vice, and fills the taverns and the stews with many debauched customers, who had they any thing else to do, or would do any thing else, might live as chaste and sober as any of their neighbours, that are so, because they are well employed. The common people think of a holy day with no other view, than that they shall then have their belly-full of ale, and rambling, and idleness. Perhaps, in the morning, they hear a sermon, which is often calculated to drive peace and religion out of their souls, and to fill them with bitterness and rage against those who provoke them, by being sober subjects, and conscientious Christians. Next comes a gluttonous meal, and a load of liquor, which adds fresh fuel to the orthodox zeal which they imbibed in the morning, and inspires them to deface or demolish places sacred to God's worship, and to affront and insult every sober man, who has not been at the brandy-shop, and will not pronounce hell and damnation according to the word of command. After all this mischief and bravery, they have recourse to more liquor, over which they swear and triumph upon their late orthodox exploits. Probably, at last they vomit up their devotions in drury-lane, and finish the holy day in a bawdy-house. Next morning, the sum of the reckoning will be this ; they have lost a day, and with it their innocence : They have risked their health and their souls ; They have provoked God ; and in his name, committed outrages upon their neighbours. Sweet Jesus ! is this the spirit of thy church ? Can these be thy followers, or the followers of thy servants.

Upon the whole ; a man may ply his imagination with black and dismal ideas, till he has made his heart as sad and sorrowful as he pleases : he may also, by playing with his fancy, and by amusing it with agreeable and humorous images, render his soul as merry as he pleases ; and by these means create either comedy or tragedy within himself ; but neither is wantonness of spirit any worship of God ; nor is this gloominess of soul any devotion to him. The Mahometan Dervises and Indian Brahmans exceed us by far in fasting and austerities : It is incredible what voluntary torture and plague they undergo in the way of religion. And as to godly ranting and roaring, the old pagan Bacchanals were as mad and as drunk on their holy days, as we of the established church can be on ours. G.



NUMBER 39.

Priests afraid of Ridicule.

RELIGION, as the popish priests have disfigured it, is only a wicked and ambitious scheme, contrived by them, to set themselves above the people. This is so true, that wherever the priests have the most power, religion has the least. Being neither appointed by the law of nature, nor the law of Christ, they are only intruders into the affairs of religion : which is therefore under an usurpation, while it is under

them. So that their foundation being false, they are in most countries reduced to support it by false facts, and deceitful appearances. And as they are thus obliged to cover fraud with fraud, and support one violence by another, it is no wonder that we find it often so carefully hidden under inventions, and deformed by absurdities ; and all those inventions and absurdities defended by cruelty and a strong hand.

This strange jumble of fictions they have the front to call by the holy name of religion, and gravely to create faith out of lies : and with the groveling multitude, whose eyes are in the earth, all this passes off well enough ; they have fearful hearts and simple heads, and so stand always prepared to be frightened or deluded at the priestly word of command. But because the craft lies subject to a daily detection from rational and discerning men, its champions have raised loud cries and strong prejudices against the two principal weapons, by which their cause is most annoyed ; I mean the weapons of reason and ridicule ; the former of which discovers truth, and the latter exposes fraud.

What civil treatment these reverend seers afford to reason, I have shewn elsewhere ; and shall handle in this paper, the business of ridicule, which they always represent as impious and profane, whenever it meddles with the cassock ; and yet always exercise it according to their talents, without mercy, when the waggish grave creatures are pleased to be arch upon dissenters or free-thinkers.

To them is no doubt owing, that frequent but false saying, now in the mouth of every ignorant ; namely, that it is an easy matter to make a jest upon religion or the priesthood ; which, whether they are aware of it or not, is saying that their religion and its priests are a jest. For he, upon whom the jest is made, does, in effect, make the jest ; otherwise it is none. Religion and virtue cannot be ridiculed ; and whoever attempts it, by showing himself a villain, raises horror instead of laughter, which is the end of ridicule. But the vending of grimace for religion, and setting up for piety without virtue, are the natural subjects of jeer and merriment.

Whoever fears ridicule, deserves ridicule. He is conscious of a weak side, and knows that he cannot stand a laugh. This is the case of sacred grimace, or gravity, which men of sense see to be only a studied restraint laid upon the muscles of the face, and the joints of the body, and teaching them to move, not by the impulses of nature, and the motions of the heart, but by design, either to attract admiration, or obtain credit, or gain followers. And therefore sacred grimace dreads men of sense. However, it is never to be set aside ; for this same affected demureness, ridiculous as it is in itself, is a solemn bait to catch the mob, whose respect always follows their wonder. The vulgar are caught, like woodcocks, by the eyes, and led, like calves, by the ears ; shew and sound lead their fat heads captive. It is therefore no wonder, that in popish countries, a shewy chancel, a curious tall steeple, gilded organs, and a delicate ring of bells, keep the many on the parson's side, make them all good churchmen ; and always get the better of a plain religion, that has its abode only in the heart, and wants all the above-mentioned marks of the true church. Besides all this, there is more mirth and more holy days in their orthodox faith,

than in the contrary scheme, which obliges men to earn heaven with the sweat of their brows, and take pains to be saved.

These, however, are but small instances, of ridicule taken from the force and grimace of an external religion. I shall here give instances much more considerable, as well as much more ridiculous. Do we not see the pretended successours of the apostles, at home and elsewhere, instead of making tents, or converting the world, living voluptuously, and promoting the excise? Do we not frequently see the ambassadors of God, sent to promote virtue and peace, and the observance of his laws, promoting strife, frequenting debauched houses, rooking after wealth, and plaguing and reviling their neighbours? Do we not see holy men, who have the call of the spirit, rioting in all the works of the flesh? Do they not buy livings with money, and then claim them by divine right? Do they not chop and jockey away poor parishes for such as are richer, and yet pretend to have upon their hands the cure of souls; though by such vile bargaining they shew that they value as little those souls which they have just bought, as they do those which they have lately sold? Do not many of them, though they are void of all merit, yet demand great respect; and though ignorant, pretend to teach, and to reveal God's will, which is already revealed, and yet live as though there were no God? And do they not, without obeying God, set up to command men? Do they not seek honour from their cloth, which yet they dishonour? And do they not, for the blackest crimes, claim sanctuary from the church, which church is the people, which people they abuse and deceive? Do they not pretend to mend others, without being better than others, but in truth more idle and proud than all others; two qualities neither suited to the welfare of religion, nor of human society? Do they not flatter and support the worst of tyrants, plague and distress, and often destroy the best of kings; and in both cases, do they not belie the Holy Ghost, and pervert his meaning? Do they not pretend to be appointed for the good of mankind, and yet always make mankind, wherever they have power, thoroughly miserable, base, poor, ignorant, and wicked? And finally, do they not invent vile lies for vile ends, and then blasphemously make God Almighty to father them?

Here is such a motly mixture of opposite principles and practices, as will always render those, who are chargeable with them, the contempt or abhorrence of all men who have eyes and understanding. Jest and scorn will subsist as long as their causes subsist; and clergymen, of all others, will be most exposed to them, while they continue to deserve them; because more modesty, truth, and consistency may be expected from them than from any others. It is but a piece of justice due to religion, to ridicule those, who, as far as they can, ridicule religion, though they set up for its defenders. Ridicule, when it has no longer matter to feed on, will die of itself; and the clergy, to avoid it, have no more to do, but not to deserve it: but to go on complaining, without amending, is to nourish raillery and satire, by their own actions. But as the reforming themselves is a practice seldom known among high-churchmen; clamour, lies, and oppression are the constant remedies they apply to the great grievances of wit and ridicule, as often as they meddle, or seem to meddle, with the cloth. This

will abundantly appear from the following instance, which will also shew the wonderful vigilance and jealousy of churchmen, in behalf of the trade.

Moliere having, in his plays, brought upon the stage characters from the highest quality and professions in France, without offending either; drew, in his *tartuffe*, an excellent and strong picture of a hypocrite, who, though carefully distinguished from a man sincerely religious, yet happened to resemble the churchmen so much, that they raised a terrible outcry against the play; and according to their laudable custom; drew heaven, head and shoulders, into their quarrel. *Tartuffe* was, it seems, their representative general, and in ridiculing his godly grimaces and stoical devotion, Moliere, they said, ridiculed them. In fine by exposing the concealed villain and debauchee, the whole posse of the priests thought themselves exposed.

Zealous therefore for the dignity of the cassock, and justly apprehending that a contempt upon hypocrisy, would bring a contempt upon the order, they applied to the court; I say to the court, where, by a religious subserviency to the ambition, lust, and all the rogueries of the great, this sort of creature always finds friendship and countenance. That arbitrary and debauched court could refuse the priests nothing; and the play was forbid. Thus the *Tartuffes* of the church, redeemed from scorn the *Tartuffe* of the stage: the picture was secured from being shewn, by the number, clamour, and interest of the originals.

Not content to rail with all due clerical bitterness against this comedy, and curse the ingenious author by word of mouth; they detached one from their body to curse him in print. This Christian author, without ever having seen the play, pronounced it diabolical: he affirmed, that Moliere had a devil, that he was a devil incarnate, a devil in man's shape, a libertine, an atheist, and one who ought to be burned in this world, as he would assuredly be damned in the next. For the vengeance of these messengers of peace never stops at the death of their victim; nor will they allow their Maker to have more mercy than themselves.

To shew how justly these holy persons were alarmed on this occasion, I shall here give a sketch of *Tartuffe's* character, as draw in that play. He is a fellow, who, from his godly outside and great poverty, is taken by an honest gentleman, credulous and devout, into his family, and permitted to govern it. He is a great glutton, and a great pretender to fasting; a great despiser of money, but rooks all he can from his deluded patron. He will not speak to my lady's maid till he has covered her bubbies with his handkerchief, so afraid is the saint of temptation; but at the same time he tempts my lady herself to adultery, and endeavours to debauch his benefactor's wife, with heaven in his mouth. The gentleman's son discovers to his father these solicitations of the hypocrite, which he had overheard; and the lady owns and confirms them; but neither of them is believed: the poor bewitched man cries, you are all enemies to the godly *Tartuffe*; and tells him, that to make him amends, he will give him his daughter, and settle his house and estate upon him. The will of the Lord be done, says the hypocrite. Accordingly, by an instant deed, to the apparent ruin of his family, he makes this godly villain heir of all he has, with a right of present possession. The lady, not knowing what was done, does,

by putting her husband under a table, make him a witness of the holy Lecher's designs and importunity. He is by this convinced; but when ashamed of himself, and enraged at the Ingrate, he bids him get out of his house; no, sir, says Tartuffe, it is your turn to get out; the house is mine, and you shall know it; I will be revenged of you, on behalf of heaven, which you would wound through my sides. Behold an orthodox pattern of the usual claim of divine right to the wages of villany and delusion!

All this behaviour, and these speeches, were such manifest marks of the church, that all its genuine sons dreaded their coming upon the theatre. Their rogueries are all sacred, and must not be set to view.

Moliere, to take away as much as was possible, all reasonable ground of clamour from the ecclesiastics, had not so much as suggested in the play that Tartuffe was a priest; and only called his comedy, the impostor, in general. Besides all this, he had dressed up his rogue like a man of the world. He had not given him so much as a flapping beaver, but a smart secular cock, with a sword, a good head of hair, a cravat, and a gaudy coat. But all this precaution of Moliere's availed not; Tartuffe had the conduct, craft, and spirit of a priest, though disguised like a layman, and the clergy found themselves whipped upon Tartuffe's back.

Eight days after Tartuffe was forbid to be acted, the court was entertained with a very irreligious play, called Scaramouch. After it was over, the king told a certain prince, that he wondered why those people, who were so scandalized at Moliere's comedy, did not say a word of this. O sir, answered the prince, the reason is plain; the play of Scaramouch only makes a jest of God and religion, in which these gentlemen are no wise concerned: But Moliere has dared to bring the priests upon the stage; which is not to be suffered. G.

NUMBER 40.

Of Priestly Cruelty.

A good man is distinguished by his humanity, as is the good God by his mercy. Where there is no humanity, there can be no grace: We cannot possess at the same time the spirit of God, and the spirit of a brute or a daemon. Charity itself, the most sublime Christian grace, seems to be only humanity guided and animated by piety: And this is the more likely, for that it is the business of the Christian religion, to recover to human nature those virtues, which were either lost or lessened by the fall of Adam. Had man continued as he was made, perfect, a new covenant and another institution had been unnecessary.

Humanity then is an amiable virtue, and the characteristick of a man; and of a man civilized, gentle, benevolent; purged from all rage, and every unsociable passion.

But the appetites and passions of men being too powerful for reason, and the law of nature ; religion was instituted to regulate and quell them. For this end, it proposes, as sanctions and restraints, the favour of God to the virtuous, and threatens his displeasure to the wicked, in this life ; and, in the next, still more adequate rewards and punishments, even those of heaven and hell. This is the great design of religion ; and it effectually answers the same, where its own honest and simple dictates are observed and followed ; than which dictates nothing can be more plain and reasonable ; the principal precept of the Gospel, next after our belief in Jesus Christ, being that of peace and love ; a new commandment, says our blessed Saviour, I give unto you, that you love one another.

In consequence of this doctrine, and of the heavenly temper which it inspired, the first Christians lived together in perfect concord, love and charity ; and yet there is no question to be made, but they differed from each other in their conceptions about some points in religion ; as we see the apostles themselves also differed on several occasions, and expressed some warmth in these their differences.

This same spirit of charity and love continued amongst the first Christians, till lying, crafty, and selfish men, calling themselves ministers, and assuming to be teachers, filled them with the spirit of discord, and instructed them to hate one another. They rent them into parties, inspired them with the bitterness of faction, and taught them its watch-words, by which they were to distinguish themselves from all other Christians ; I am of Paul, I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and the like cant, full of zeal, but void of sense and religion, had a direct and mischievous tendency to abolish faith in Christ, and to place it upon men ; and, in fine, to turn Christianity into caballing. They likewise marked out all who would not be driven nor deceived by them, with malicious and opprobrious names, proper to expose them to hatred and ill usage. heretick, apostate, unbeliever, schismatick. and the like hard and equivocal words, were found strangely effectual towards stirring up rage, revenge, and relentless war, against those unhappy people, who were miscalled by them ; so effectual ! That the same sett of men have never suffered the same sett of words to wax obsolete, but to this day use them, and cause them to be used, to the same impious and anti-Christian purpose, and (where the law does not restrain their bloody hands, and guard the innocent) with the same success.

When these ungodly and merciless ecclesiasticks had thus, under the cloak of religion, craftily raised the blind resentment and impious zeal of their deluded followers, against their Christian brethren, who preferred the spirit of the gospel, and the honest convictions of their consciences, to the pride and commands of men ; there followed such amazing instances of cruelty, and such terrible scenes of blood, as must affect the hearts and the eyes of all who read them, or hear of them, if they possess either Christian grace or natural compassion. Christians were, by their priests, set on to butcher Christians ; and to make havock of each other, in the name of that religion, which was distinguished from all other religions, by a spirit of meekness, mercy, and love : and all this perhaps, for their different manner of explaining a mystery, which could not be explained ; or which, if explained, ceased to be one.

This restless and unrelenting rage, which Christians practised, at the instigation of their clergy, upon one another, for thoughts and opinions which they could not help, was a strong and a lasting stumbling-block in the way of the unconverted ; who could have but small appetite for a religion, which disowned all kindred to peace and humanity, and inspired its votaries with such cruel hatred, and such dreadful fury : for, in short, that was the religion which they were to embrace ; a religion no longer to be found in the gospel of Christ, but in the ridiculous systems and selfish inventions of priests. And it was no wonder that the heathens were backward and afraid to embrace a religion, in which the involuntary mistake of a priestly distinction, without a meaning, might cost them their lives, and ruin their families.

So terrible and deformed had merciless Christian priests rendered the merciful and amiable Christian religion ! Their outrageous zeal was become so powerful, and had such bloody effects, that the pagan persecutions were real advantages to Christianity, as they gave it a breathing time from the more fatal persecutions and even adulterations of its own priests ; who, while the civil sword was over their heads, being obliged to abscond or fly, could not throw about their balls of contention and war ; and, therefore, against their will, left religion to flourish, as it always did, under those pagan persecutions, which their own turbulent and seditious behaviour had often brought upon it. This is indeed their highest praise, that the church reaped good from their wickedness.

The pagan persecutions no sooner ceased, but the war of the Christian priests re-commenced ; and the persecutions raised by them were ever more merciless and more dreadful, than those which were raised by the heathen princes ; forasmuch as they added, as far as they could, the destruction of the soul to that of the body : so complete was their vengeance ! And, besides, it had no end : the severity of the heathens had long and frequent intermissions ; but the cruelty of the priests was insatiable.

The persecutions practised by the pagans had, moreover, this mitigation, that they were occasioned for the most part by the words and external behaviour of Christians, who contemned their Gods, neglected their temples, and ridiculed their manner of worship : in all which, though they had reason and truth on their side ; yet they provoked by so doing these ignorant bigots, whose false religion laid no restraint upon their passions, but on the contrary greatly inflamed them. But the priestly war was waged against the mind itself ; the free and independent mind ! They would be controuling the voluntary, necessary, and invincible motions and operations of the soul ; and be putting bonds upon the imagination, which is as ungovernable as the wind or the sea. You must say after them, nay, you must think after them, and believe by their direction ; and either be slaves or hypocrites. A terrible and inflexible tyranny ! It was to no purpose to alledge, that you could not perform impossibilities, nor see with other men's eyes : you must be punished for what you could not help ; you must be delivered to satan, in spite of your innocence : and rewarded with hell for your sincerity, and well-meaning : and the same honest qualities which entitled you to the certain favour of God, provoked the certain vengeance of his pretended ambassadors ; to whose empire, virtue and

truth are ever the most formidable foes. To complete this ghostly barbarity, not appeased by death and damnation ; your good name must be murdered with your body, and your memory loaded with monstrous calumnies, and bitter defamations ; which merciless treatment could be expected only from that accursed spirit, who has been a liar and a murderer from the beginning ; or from those who are acted by him. To pity you, was unpardonable ; and to speak well of you, was to involve all those who did it, in your doom. Thus holy wrath is, of all others, the soonest kindled, the fiercest while it burns, and the slowest in going out, if ever it goes out.

It would be endless to give instances of the bloody spirit of such sort of churchmen. They are the only body of men upon earth, who possess least of human compassion. They have been even ingenious in cruelty, and shewed vast invention in their rigid, various, implacable, and exquisite manner of executing it. *Ita feri, ut se mori sentiat*, seems to have been the doctrine and delight of the church, as well as of Caligula. Neither he, nor Phalaris, nor Perillus, nor Nero, nor any other pagan monster, who made himself sport with human agonies and misery, has exceeded them in the variety and inhumanity of his projected tortures, nor equalled them in the length.

It is a melancholy observation, that the Mahometans, who by principle use the sword, as their great and most prevailing apostle for the propagation of their religion, do yet frankly tolerate Christianity, and every sect of it, all over their dominions : and that, on the contrary, Christians, who by the doctrine of the gospel are allowed the use of no means but those of gentleness and persuasion, to promote the faith of Jesus Christ, do yet exercise fierceness and barbarity upon all who differ from them, where-ever the mercy of the government does not restrain the cruelty of the clergy. Thus far the Turks act, as if they were conducted by grace, and obeyed the precepts of our blessed Saviour ; and thus far the Christians act, as if they had adopted the spirit and fierceness of Mahomet, and renounced the gospel for the alcoran.

However, that I may not seem partial to the Mahometans, I shall add this mournful reflection ; namely, that too many of the Christian clergy do justly share with these infidels, the infamous praise of having almost dispeopled the earth. The infidels have slain their thousands, and they their ten thousands. They have been the great promoters of cruelty and the sword ; they have been the constant patrons of arbitrary power, that mighty engine for rendering mankind few and miserable ; they have been the continued authors of wars, famine and massacres ; and, in fine, they have been the great instruments of driving virtue, truth, peace, mercy, plenty and people, out of the world. Kill all, said the abbot Arnold, a monk militant, to the army, which being employed by the church to slaughter the poor pious Albigenses, had taken the city of Bezeir, and being laymen, were inclining to have some mercy ; kill all, cried this bloody priest, God knows his own, and will reward them hereafter. Accordingly, two hundred thousand of these conscientious Christians, and catholicks mixed with them, were instantly butchered for the church.

To conclude : our modern claimers of church-authority, do but contend for the same power and advantages, which enabled and prompted these their brethren to execute such numerous and melancholy mis-

chiefs; and whether they ought to possess that power, and these advantages, or no, I take to be the great point in debate between the bishop of Bangor and his adversaries. G.

NUMBER 41.

The folly of the Clergy's demanding respect when their characters are bad; with the equity of universal toleration, and of judging for ourselves.

THERE is not a greater insult upon the understandings of mankind, than for priests to challenge respect from their habit, when they have forfeited it by their behaviour. There is no sanctity in garments. A rose in a man's hat does not enlarge his piety. Grace is not conveyed by a piece of lawn, or chastity by the wearing of a girdle. A black gown has neither more sense, nor better manners, than a black cloak. Nor is a black cloak more edifying than a fustian frock; no more than a cambrick bib is an antidote against lewdness, or an atonement for it.

This consecrating of garments, and deriving veneration from a suit of clothes, is bare-faced priestcraft. It is teaching the practice of idolatry to a gown, and cassock. If a little senseless pedant, who is a living contradiction to virtue and good-breeding, can but get into orders, and cover himself with crape, the first thing which he does, is to overlook and affront all mankind, and then demand their reverence. His surplice is his citadel, and he claims the impunity of an ambassador for being graceless and saucy.

As to the common defence which is made for their immoralities; namely, that they are flesh and blood as well as other men, it is a wretched piece of sophistry. If they are not better than others, how are they fit to mend others? And if they cannot leave their captivity to sin and satan, how come they to claim so near an alliance with heaven? If they have God's commission in their pockets, and yet will engage in another service, what name and treatment do they deserve? We know the fate of rebels and deserters in a lay government. Can men succeed to the apostles with the qualities and behaviour of apostates? How will they reconcile a holy calling to infamous lives? A clergyman who is as bad as an ill layman, is consequently worse. In a holy character, there is no medium between doing good and doing mischief; since the influence of example is stronger than that of precept. As the doctrine and practice of piety, make up the profession of a clergyman, he who deserts truth and holiness, deserts his profession, and ought to be no longer owned for a teacher of religion, but shunned and hated, as a foe to religion and mankind.

I have a great respect for the office of a clergyman; and for his person, if he deserve it. But if his doctrine or practice disgrace his order; we cannot help condemning the man. The clergy are the best or the worst of men; and as the first cannot be too much honoured,

the latter cannot be too much despised. It is of good example, and there is equal reason in it. Why should virtue and villany fare alike? Names do not change qualities, nor habits men. Where is the equity of rewards and punishments, and consequently the force of all laws human and divine, if vile men must be revered, and the good can be no more?

- It is but reasonable that all men should be judged by their actions, and revered, or scorned, according to the goodness or wickedness of their lives, without any regard had to their titles or garbs; which signify no more than a breath of wind, or the bark of a tree.

The clergy have made such a terrible and inhuman use of power, in all ages and countries where they could come at it, that the laity ought to keep their nails always pared, and their wings clipped, in this particular. Reason and liberty are the two greatest gifts and blessings which God has given us, and yet wherever a priestly authority prevails they must either fly or suffer. They are enemies to the craft, and must expect no toleration. Darkness and chains are the surest pillars of the sacerdotal empire, and it cannot stand without them.

Let us remember archbishop Laud, who having got the regal power out of a weak prince's hands, into his own, set his face against truth, property, conscience, and liberty, and trampled them all under foot for several years together. A spirit of cruelty and dominion governed this man, and he governed king and people. His heart was so impiously bent upon destroying conscience and the constitution, and exalting the priesthood, that when any man was oppressed in a paltry, and tyrannical bishop's court, the judges in Westminster hall durst not obey their oaths, and the law, by relieving him; but were forced to be forsworn, to avoid the anger of his grace. This upstart, plebian priest, hoped to see the time, when never a jack gentleman in England would dare to stand before a parson with his hat on. A fine scene truly! To see a gentleman of fortune, and breeding, stand stooping, and bare-headed, to a small, ill-nurtured vicar; who had, perhaps, formerly cleaned his shoes, and lived upon the crumbs that came from his table!

Let us look back into former ages, and round Europe at this day, and see whether abject slavery in the people is not, and always has been, the certain consequence of power in the priests. It cannot be denied.

I thank God I know no power which our clergy have but that of suing for titles, and the like privileges, which they receive from the law alone. Those ecclesiasticks who claim, by divine right, any other power, than that of exhortation, talk nonsense, and belie the new testament. To the law, and the people who made that law, they owe their bread; and to set up for an independency in opposition to both, and pretend to a mastership over them, is arrogant, dangerous, and ought to be penal. I am told that it is capital, here in England, for a protestant to go over to the Romish religion; and yet shall a priest dare publicly, from the press and the pulpit, to claim and justify, the most essential, and most formidable principles of popery; and thereby declare his reconciliation with that bloody religion, which is supported by frauds, bondage, and human slaughter: and shall he for all this go unquestioned? This, in my opinion, is to contend with impunity for usurpation and rebellion.

Some would seem to qualify these pretensions, by saying, that they claim a power, but not an independent power. Which seems, in this case, a sort of a contradiction. For if it is a power, and yet depends upon another power; then is it, properly speaking, a jurisdiction of subjection, and an authority under authority. And while the law and the hierarchy are thus owned to be master and man, we desire no more.

It is certainly as impious as unjust to deny an unlimited toleration to all dissenters whatsoever, who own the laws and our civil form of government. As to their religious opinions, they are justified in them by sincerity; and even where that is wanting, God alone is able to judge, and alone has a right to punish. In matters of conscience, he who does his best, does well, though he be mistaken. Here all men must determine for themselves: he who follows another in this case, without enquiry, is man's votary, and not God's. As we have a right to enquire into the truth of any religion, we have also a right to leave it, if it appear false: but if it stand the test of examination, and appear true, then is our adherence to it founded upon our own judgment, and not upon authority. If there be no right of inquiry, where is the use of persuasion, which implies doubt? Or of reading the scripture, which implies understanding? We believe not a thing 'till we think it true; and cannot believe it, if we think it false: and to punish men for having eyes, or having none, is equally devilish and tyrannical.

Men disagree daily about matters which are subject to the examination of sense; and is it likely that we can be all of a mind about things which are invisible and disputable? Doctors themselves are daily cavilling; every one contradicts another, yet all are in the right, and each demands our faith to his particular invention. We cannot follow all; and among equal authorities, pray which is the best? For the same reason that we cannot believe every one of them, we need believe none of them, upon their own word.

It is moreover just that all protestants should be equally employed in a state to which they are equally well affected. The magistrate has nothing to do with speculations that purely concern another life: nor is it of any consequence to him, whether his subjects have a greater fondness for a cloak or a surplice: their affections to the political power, and their capacity to serve it, are only to be consulted and encouraged. Provided a man love liberty and his country, what is it to the commonwealth whether he sing his prayers or say them? Or whether he think a bishop or a presbyter the nearer relation to St. Paul.

These two words (bishop and presbyter) signify, in scripture, one and the same thing, and are equally used to design one and the same officer. Our great churchmen, indeed, have been pleased to think the bible mistaken in this matter, and to be in the right themselves. They have made episcopacy and presbytery as opposite to each other, as paradise and purgatory; and have frequently gone to cutting of throats, to prove their point.

I must confess a diocese, and a seat in the house of lords, are unanswerable reasons for the divine right of episcopacy. There is no way of confuting them. You may as well argue with a Guinea merchant against the selling of slaves.

Besides, a lordly creature, who never preaches (miracles having long ago ceased) and keeps a great table and equipage. and enjoys all

the great and good things of this life, carries in all these marks such an evidence of his being St. Paul's right heir, in a lineal descent, that I wonder any body dare doubt it.

However, as the plainest things in faith are made doubtful among divines, who have an admirable knack at starting difficulties, where no body else would expect them ; I am of opinion, that the teacher who walks on foot, has as good a title to dispute about religion, and to maintain his own, as the right reverend doctor, who supports his orthodoxy with a coach and six ; and should be as much encouraged by the civil magistrate, if his principles and behaviour square with the constitution. Is a man a better neighbour, or subject, for nodding to a table, at the upper end of a chancel, or for pronouncing his faith towards the east ? Our churchmen may find good cause to enjoin these necessary things, which the scripture had forgot, and enjoy great benefit and obedience from the practice of them ; but in temporal matters, I am not fully convinced that they make a man's head wiser, or his heart honester.

A good protestant is such, not because he was born so, according to the canting absurdity in vogue ; or bred so, since in infancy religion is acquired like a lesson in grammar, purely by the help of memory ; and therefore children learn it, whether it be good or bad, as they do language, from their nurse, or their parents. But he is a protestant, because his judgement and his eyes inform him, that the principles of that faith are warranted by the bible, and consistent with our civil liberties ; and he thinks every system which is not so, to be forgery and imposture, however dignified or distinguished.

I cannot here omit taking notice of an old fallacious cry which has long rung in our ears ; namely, that of no bishop, no king. This solid argument was used, with royal success, by king James the first, when he sat deputy for the clergy, and disputed with the puritans at the conference at Hampton court, as became the dignity of a great prince. It was, indeed, the best which he could use ; however he strengthened, and embellished it, with several imperial oaths, which he swore on that occasion, to the utter confusion of his antagonists, and the great triumph of the genuine clergy and the archbishop ; who bestowed the Holy Ghost upon his majesty, for his zeal and swearing on the church's side.

This stupid saying has formerly filled our prisons with dissenters, and chased many of them to America ; and by this means weakened the kingdom and the protestant religion, to keep up good neighbourhood between the bishops and the prince. But they were neither the bishops, nor their creatures, that restored king Charles the second, but a set of true-blue presbyterians, who were rewarded for it with goals, fines, and silent Sabbaths.

Loyalty is not confined to the mitre. Bishops have given more disturbance, and occasioned more distresses to prince and people, than any other sort of men upon earth. This I can prove. Our own bishops, for near an hundred years before the revolution, were in every scheme for promoting tyranny and bondage. On the other hand, our dissenters were ever eminent opposers of arbitrary power, and always lived peaceably under those princes who used them like subjects. If they took up arms when they were oppressed, churchmen have done the same, and often without that cause.

Had it not been for dissenters, I question whether we should now have had either this constitution, this king, or this religion. It is well known that a great majority of our churchmen assert claims and principles utterly irreconcilable to either. The most mischievous tenets of popery are adopted and maintained, and the ground upon which our security and succession stand, is boldly undermined. It is dreadful, and incredible, what a reprobate spirit reigns amongst the high clergy.

The convocation have fallen fiercely upon those who have fallen upon popery and jacobitism. And what a popish, impious and rebellious spirit reigns at Oxford, they themselves save me the trouble of declaring. Disaffection is promoted; open and black perjury is justified; and it is held lawful to defy Almighty vengeance for a morsel of bread. A man's conscience is tried by an oath, and he that can swallow any, has none.

But it is not enough to shipwreck their souls for their livings, nor to keep this hellish corruption at home. As they practise, so they teach; and the spreading of their own guilt, and the making others as bad as themselves (if laymen can be so) is made the duty of their functions, and the business of their lives. Can antichrist do worse? And are these men who walk in the paths of atheism, and perdition, fit to lead others to holiness and eternal life?

* One of the greatest men of the last age told King William, that the universities, if they continued upon the present foot, would destroy him, or the nation, or some of his successors. And they have ever since been endeavouring to make good his words. That Prince was so thoroughly apprized of the dangerous genius and principles of these two bodies of men, that he intended a regulation; but as it is said, was prevented by the pernicious advice of the late Duke of S——, who had at that time gained the king's confidence, and was at the head of the whigs, but was deserting both, and making a party with the torries, as afterwards plainly enough appeared.

How far, and how fast, these seminaries have since then corrupted and inflamed the people, every body knows, and the nation feels. Had it not been for them, we should have lighter taxes and fewer soldiers.

G.

* Mr. Locke.

NUMBER 42.

Of High-Church Atheism.

THAT religion, or the worship of a Deity, is natural to man, is confessed by Mr. Hobbes himself in his *Leviathan*, wherein he endeavours to assign the natural causes thereof: And no history or voyages give us an account of any country, in any manner civilized, without religion, as well as priests or ministers, and temples or places of worship. Men have been in all ages so prone to religion, that rather than not

have one, they have been contented to worship the most abject beings in nature; and indeed, nothing seems to have been too absurd and ridiculous for them to believe and practice, under the direction of any men, who had confidence enough to take upon them to be spiritual guides of the people. It was ever sufficient, to pretend to teach religion, to make any thing to be received as religion.

The Egyptians worship'd dogs, and for
That faith made internecine war.
Others ador'd a rat, and some
For that church suffer'd martyrdom.
The Indians fought for the truth
Of th' Elephant's and Monkey's tooth.
But no beast ever was so slight,
For man as for his God to fight.
They have more wit, alas! and know
Themselves and us better than so.

HUDIBRAS.

Nor is this disposition at all abated in the world. The pagan part is much the same. And many Christians are more prone, if possible, to absurdity and folly, than the pagans. The Popish, Greek, and several other Christian sects worship a breadden God; and, besides other numerous absurdities and follies, exceed them in that grand one of all, of delivering up their persons, estates, and consciences, to the priest; and of hating, damning, persecuting, and burning one another, and all who have any difference in opinion with them, as he inspires them: In all which they outgo both the ancient and modern pagans, who have generally given toleration to men of different religions from themselves, and have in no place gone those lengths in persecution which some Christians (or rather some persons pretending to be Christians) have done.

As a farther proof that religion is natural to man, I observe, that no history informs us that ever atheism (by which I understand, a direct denial of the existence of a deity, a providence, and worship) was able to introduce itself among the people of any country whatsoever.

Religion is not only natural to man, but esteemed necessary to government by princes and states, who, whether they themselves have believed any religion or no, have established forms of religion, and been willing that their subjects should obey them, and defend their country, upon a principle of religion, as knowing its powerful operation on the minds of men.

And besides, religion has a great support from priests or divines, who are very numerous every where, and have a zeal for every form which they profess, equal to the interest which they derive from it: And if the interest of one form runs low, many of them can change their party, and become zealous for another religion; as they did three times, in the compass of five years in England, in the reigns of Edward the sixth, Mary and Elizabeth; the non-complying clergy never amounting to two hundred under any of those changes.

Great complaints indeed have been and are daily made in relation to the mighty growth of atheism. But those complaints seem to me for the most part, if not altogether, groundless, and to be generally calumnies of high-church priests, and high-churchmen, upon the best

Christians, namely, such who profess themselves ready to submit to the authority of Jesus Christ, but refuse submission to any priests, whether they be Greek, Muscovite, Roman, Dutch, Scotch, or English.

There is not, therefore, and cannot be, any danger of the overthrow of religion, as long as men continue men; religion will necessarily prevail amongst us, and every where else, in virtue of men's general disposition to religion, either under one or several forms, according as the civil magistrates of the world are more or less persuaded, that they themselves are to dictate (or to dictate after a priest) religion to their subjects.

The noisy outcry therefore of the danger of religion from atheism or irreligion, is a mere chimera of the high priests; which, in all likelihood, they start, to put men on a false scent, and to disguise and carry on their own designs of power and wealth: For while people are alarmed with the fears of atheism, they are disposed to fall into all the pretended measures of the priest to suppress it, and to become zealous for him, who never fails to make use of the pannick or madness of the people (which is his opportunity) to establish doctrines and practices for his own advantage; which at his suggestion they falsely suppose to be most opposite to atheism, and to be the best means to suppress it.

But the constant danger, and the great and only concern which we ought to have, is, lest, under the colour and name of religion, or the worship of God, we have not only falsehood and superstition put upon us, but the most detestable and wicked practices introduced; such as tend to the destruction of all peace, both publick and private; all virtue, learning, and whatever is praise-worthy among men. This is practical atheism: This is the atheism to be dreaded and feared: This is the atheism whereof we are in danger: This is the worst consequence we have to fear from speculative atheism; for no man can say worse of speculative atheism, than that it leads necessarily to all immorality: And in fine, this atheism the priest has, in most places of the world, introduced as religion, to the utter overthrow of true religion; (which consists chiefly, if not solely, in such particulars as are for the good of society) for by making men wicked out of conscience, and upon a principle of religion, he as effectually destroys true religion, as if he introduced speculative atheism. What is it to a believer in Christ, whether he be persecuted for his religion by a papist, who does it religiously, and upon a principle of conscience; or by an atheist, who does it either to protect himself, or to get credit in the world, or to share with the priest, in the advantages arising from persecution? Do men suffer less by a civil or foreign war, begun by zealots, on a principle of religion, to promote religion; than if begun by atheists, for the sake of ambition, glory, power, rapine, or murder? Are the feuds, animosities and passions, stirred up by priests on account of religion, fewer and less disturbing of the publick peace, than those of men left to the conduct of atheistical principles? Is it not equal to husbands to be wronged by atheists, who need no pardon, as by popish priests, who can pardon one another; or by high-churchmen, who, notwithstanding such actions, can be countenanced by the priest, and merit greatly with him, on account of their zeal for the church, that is, the priest? Nay, is not the danger of cuckoldom equal from a popish priest (who, by his power of confessing and absolving the woman, has so glo-

rious an opportunity) as from an atheist? And would our high priests, if they could get the nation to be persuaded that they have the same power of confessing and absolving, (as they have of late been attempting to do in their books and sermons) be less cuckold-makers than popish priests and atheists?

Could an atheist be a greater calumniator than Dr. S—e? Could an atheist, who thinks no deference due to a bishop, have less regard for the honour of a Christian bishop than Dr. S—e, who pretends to think bishops have divine authority? Could an atheist, after he had been convicted of calumny, and forced to confess that his evidence for the calumny failed him, be more hardened in villany, than to make no satisfaction to, and ask no pardon of the person injured, but persist in supposing that time will discover his charge to be true? Could a set of atheists have patronized calumny more, than to have called that doctor to be the head of their society; and might they not with equal regard to virtue and religion, have chosen a highwayman, or a pick-pocket, who gives his money for the augmentation of poor livings? Has a modern bishop more satisfaction in being thus attacked by a high-church priest, supported and abetted by others; or is the society less disturbed by such proceedings, than if such priests were all atheists?

Lastly, is it not equally destructive of liberty and property, for ecclesiasticks to use religious cheats and tricks to get money from the people, towards raising and maintaining a needless army of black coats, to live lazily in monasteries, and other religious houses; as for atheists to use any civil tricks to maintain a needless standing army of red coats, or by their arts to plunder the publick for any of their other purposes?

The design therefore of some following papers shall be to shew how the high church jacobite clergy promote true atheism and irreligion: That the laity may be put on the true scent of atheism: That they may have a just dread of the true atheism: That they may cease to be atheists, or worshippers of the priest, and cease to receive religion on his authority; and that they may return to God and Christ, the sole authors of all true religion.

C.

NUMBER 43.

Of High-Church Atheism. Part 2.

I PROCEED, as I promised in my last, to shew, by an induction of particulars, how the high-church priests promote true atheism, or irreligion, by which I mean practical atheism.

I. And, first, I will begin with perjury, or false swearing.

I will venture to lay it down as a truth in politicks, that oaths (or something equivalent to them) are, on many occasions, necessary in government; and that peace among neighbours, punishment of rogues, and the settlement of property, depend upon them. In the next place,

I will lay down as religious truths, that an oath is a solemn act, both of natural and revealed religion ; that oaths to a government are to be kept ; that there is no greater irreligion, no greater affront to God, no greater insincerity and injustice to man, than perjury ; and no point of religion, upon which the honour of God, and the welfare of mankind, are more highly concerned, than in keeping oaths ; that oaths of allegiance to a government intend loyalty ; that oaths are to be taken in the sense of the imposers ; that the heart is to concur with the lips in repeating them ; that men are to have no mental reserves in taking oaths ; and that they must not design to break them, nor take them with design to repent of them.

And yet, on this head, atheists cannot be guilty of greater irreligion than some of our high-churchmen, (under the conduct of our high church priests) who sometimes are not for restraining our kings by their coronation oaths ; and, at other times, are not for restraining the people, by their oaths of allegiance ; that is, they are at one time for breaking oaths, by contending for unlimited power, and unlimited obedience ; and at another time for breaking oaths, by retrenching the authority of the prince, and allegiance of the subject. Under this reign, they are for the latter perjury : as appears by their open rebellions ; their irreverent discourses of the person, and family, of his majesty ; their endeavours to alienate from him the hearts of his subjects ; and inspiring the people with disaffection to his government ; their inventing and reporting defamatory stories, to blemish his character, and weaken his authority ; their rejoicing at any publick distractions ; their taking sides with the French, Turks, Swedes, Spaniards and Muscovites, whenever any of these nations are in measures contrary to the interest of his majesty ; and lastly, by the ridiculing and cracking jests upon the state-oaths, and citing, as a sort of scripture, these verses of Hudibras ;

He that imposes an oath makes it,
Not he that for convenience takes it.
Then how can any man be said
To break an oath he never made ?

And these things are done by them, not after an atheistical manner ; not under the appearance of attacking and ridiculing religion and virtue, the joys of heaven, and the fears of hell ; but almost as if slander and calumny, treason and sedition, were articles of their church, which they were in duty obliged to perform. They pretend all the while to be religious men, good churchmen ; concerned for the church's safety ; enemies of false religion, and particularly of presbyterianism ; and zealous for the orthodox faith, contained in St. Athanasius's creed. And though the high church priests have not as yet written any books to defend this manner of taking and keeping oaths ; yet they take a method, no less effectual to recommend it : They not only do not bear their testimony against this open wickedness, this open practical atheism, (as is their duty) but are active themselves in the same practices, and countenance the guilty, by the credit and applause which they give them ; and by the distinction which they shew towards them, recommending them as good churchmen, and reviling others, principally, for being faithful to the oaths which they have taken to the government.—

All which is more effectual to promote perjury, than direct dogmatizing in behalf of it; for this sly way gets them the applause of many, and prevents the clamour of others against them; who would be generally detested, notwithstanding the devotion of the people towards them, if they openly defended perjury.

Now, pray, what is the difference between these high-churchmen and atheists? Can atheists be less bound by oaths? Can atheists be worse subjects? Are not atheists detestable, because it is supposed that they cannot be bound by oaths? And are others less detestable, whom oaths do not bind? Can any thing be said worse of atheists, than what Mr. Lesley says (in his answer to King's state of the protestants in Ireland) that the parliament cannot make an oath which the clergy will not take? Had not King George reason to apprehend as much mischief from his swearing—religious—faction—rebel—church-subjects, as he could have from swearing—rebel atheists? Was the case of the dissenters, and other good subjects, who were plundered before the rebellion for their loyalty, or suffered in the rebellion, better for receiving such usage from the hands of high-churchmen, than from atheists? They are plainly as bad as atheists can ever be supposed to be; worse than atheists, acting by the principles of ease and self-preservation, which may be supposed to be the most general principles of action in atheists; and, in fine, worse than any profligate libertines that I ever met with in Italy itself, that seat of high-churchship; where I never heard even such talk so irreligiously about oaths, as I have heard some high-churchmen, or deliver such open perjury as parson B—se. What adds to the wickedness and guilt of these high-churchmen, is, that they pretend to be Christians, and to take their religion from the New-Testament; that they are of a church, whose distinguishing doctrine is loyalty to the prince, and which they extend so far, as to allow resistance in no case to be lawful; and that they have a sovereign, against whom they have nothing to object, but his virtues, his mild, equal, impartial and just administration of government; for as to his title (which is the best of titles, even the voluntary establishment of a free people by an act of their legislature) these swearing high-churchmen can have no just scruple.

These high-churchmen therefore are true atheists: They are practical atheists. The speculative difference between them and atheists, is a matter of small moment; for, what is it to their neighbours, while they act like atheists, that they believe in God and religion? For, while they act like atheists, they do all the mischief that atheists can do, and all those things for which alone atheism is so justly detestable. For if speculative atheism did not lead men to immorality, to faction, to rebellion, &c. it would be so far from being destable, that it would be preferable to any religion that spoiled men's morals, and made them bad subjects: And I would rather have a speculative atheist for my neighbour, and fellow-subject, and run the hazard of his being a vicious man, than an orthodox-religious man, whose religion made him vicious.

C.

NUMBER 44.

Of High-Church Atheism. Part 3.

THE next article of atheism, that I charge upon high-church priests and high-churchmen, shall relate to the very being of religion, and that is, toleration of religion; for unless there be a toleration of religion, religion which is a matter of choice and conscience, is almost excluded the world.

It is asserted by Mr. Hobbes, that the civil magistrate of every country is the legislator in matters of religion; that his subjects ought to obey him therein; and that, if they do not, they should be compelled by force to profess that religion which he enjoins. This doctrine implies speculative atheism, as it destroys God's dominion, by subverting his authority and laws, and by making a God of the magistrate; and as it roots out all religion, by taking away men's right to follow their consciences therein; which constitutes the very essence of religion: and it must introduce practical atheism; if followed; by disturbing, distressing, imprisoning, and taking away the lives of the best men; by setting men at variance with one another, and causing civil wars on a religious account; and by leaving men to be governed only by the laws of the civil magistrate, and taking away all motives to good actions drawn from conscience towards God.

Now the speculative principles of high-church priests, and those of atheists, differ but little from each other; and the practices following from both their principles are the same; that is, the high-church priests must be no less practical atheists, than the speculative atheists themselves.

1. For, first, as to the speculative principles of high-church priests: Though the high-church priests contend for a law of God, a bible and a conscience; yet they effectually subvert those good things, as the atheists, by asserting at the same time, a right in the civil magistrate to compel men by laws, or force, to embrace the true religion: For, what is the difference between a right in the magistrate to compel men to embrace the true religion, and a right in the magistrate to compel men to embrace his religion, which he will always think the best and true religion?

All the arguments of high-church priests for church authority, and church-unity, imply the same atheism. For, do they not therein contend for submission to man in matters of religion, and for the sacrifice of some men's consciences to the judgements of other men? Which is subverting the law of God, the bible and conscience, no less, than vesting the power and compulsion in the civil magistrate.

But their arguments against all innovations, in matters of religion, are most atheistical. They contend so generally against innovations, that they cite with approbation Mæcenas's advice to Augustus, namely, that he should follow constantly the established religion of his country; for all innovations would foment sedition in the state, and be a means to subvert his government. Now though this advice so manifestly asserts atheism and hobbesism, and implies, that neither Augustus, in whose

reign our blessed Saviour Christ was born, nor any other pagan prince, ought to permit Christianity, which is the most pure and peaceable religion, to become the established religion of their country; yet Dr. Dawson has lately had the confidence to lay it before the present archbishop of Canterbury.*; whose conduct and writings, before he was promoted to that see, gave not the doctor the least ground to suspect, that this worthy prelate would approve such atheism, irreligion, and anti-christianism; and no man dares say that they have done so since.

2. Secondly, the practices following from the principles of high-church priests, are the same with those following from the principles of atheism. For, do not many Christian civil magistrates exercise the right asserted by high-church priests to belong to them, and fine, burn, imprison, inflict corporal punishments, take away men's natural rights, merely because men follow their consciences in what they are persuaded is the law of God? And what more can be done in virtue of any atheistical principles? Nor do the notions of a bible, a law of God, and a conscience, (however inconsistent such notions are with making penal laws in matters of religion) render high-churchmen less persecutors, than if they were acted by any atheistical principles; as is manifest from what is done in most countries, where, in proportion to the power and influence of high-church priests, degrees of violence upon men's consciences prevail. Nor do the precepts of Christ, who requires all men to search the scriptures, and to believe and live according to the rules there laid down, and who never sends men to the magistrate or the established priests for the understanding of the bible, abate in the least their persecuting zeal. Nor lastly, does the most perfect morality taught by Christ; who every where inculcates love of mankind, forbearance, (with forgiveness even of many immoralities) and universal charity, and who has said, by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another; I say even this heavenly doctrine of his, does not restrain the high-church priest from stirring up in men's minds the utmost hatred, malice, and fury of men against one another; who seem to learn little else from their priests as matter of religion, but the doctrine of malice against those whom he dislikes. Which doctrine they practice with such warmth and zeal, as if it was the principal or only article of religion; and therein do more mischief than men acted by atheistical principles can be supposed to do; for atheism is as incapable of making men uncharitable to one another, on account of religion, as it is inconsistent with true religion to be uncharitable.

How these atheistical practises have prevailed in England, even since the reformation, (for I will not mention the times before, wherein this priestly atheism was rampant) is apparent from our history, which gives an account of the burning, hanging, fining, imprisoning, starving in goals, banishing, corporal punishments, and harrassing thousands of good and religious people, on the score of religion; upon which I crave leave to make these observations.

1. First, that as the high-church priests have been always most forward in making and defending penal laws; so they have been the most barbarous and malicious in putting them in execution, where they

* Dr. William Wake.

were intrusted with it, as is manifest from the proceedings in the star-chamber ; where, under the influence of archbishop Laud, and such high-priests, exorbitant fines, slitting noses, cutting off ears, branding the face with hot irons, severe whipping, the pillory, and imprisonment for life in dungeons, or places either unwholesome or remote from friends, were common punishments ; and sometimes all inflicted upon one man. Upon pronouncing one of these sentences against Leighton, Laud pulled off his cap, and gave thanks to God. But the lay part of the court were merely priest-driven and outwitted by Laud in such sentences : for when a knight moved one of the lords about the dreadful-ness of the sentence, intimating, that it opened a gap to the prelates to inflict such disgraceful punishments and tortures upon men of quality ; that lord replied, 'twas but in terrorem, and that he would not have any one think, that the sentence should ever be executed. But that lord (either judging of other men by himself, or perhaps joining in the sentence upon a promise from Laud, that it should not be executed) found himself mistaken in Laud, who, having long divested himself of all lay piety, caused the sentence to be rigorously put in execution.

2. Secondly, the ecclesiastical commissioners in the high-commission court put the oath, *ex officio*, upon those brought before them on the score of religion ; an oath, unjust in itself, as it obliged the parties to answer all interrogatories, and thereby made all honest men, if guilty of any thing esteemed a fault, their own accusers ; and an oath, neither founded on act of parliament, nor on common law in that case. After what manner this usurped power of administering that oath was exercised, you cannot have better expressed, than in the words of the lord treasurer Burleigh to archbishop Whitgift. Your articles are so curiously penned, so full of branches and circumstances, that the inquisitors of Spain use not so many questions to comprehend and entrap their preys.

3. Thirdly, I observe, that whenever the parliament has been disposed to introduce the practice of our Saviour's doctrine of love and charity, by repealing any penal and sanguinary laws, the high-church bishops always opposed such repeal. In proof whereof, I will give the reader but one instance, refering him to his own observation for more proofs in the case. In 1677, when the nation and parliament were under great apprehensions from popery and a popish successor, and feared lest the law for burning hereticks would be soon put in execution against protestants, a repeal of that law was attempted and succeeded : but it was opposed by the bishops, who desired that this law might continue in terrorem to fanatics, though God forbid, said they, that it should ever be put in execution. This fact, and many others of the same kind, will soon be made more known by the late bishop of Sarum's history of his times.

4. Fourthly, I observe, that the persecutions since the reformation have mostly been for arrant trifles and things of the least importance to the world : we have been chiefly plagued and set together by the ears, about caps, hoods, surplices, ceremonies, external forms, removing tables from one part of a church to another, and railing them in. But the most extraordinary subject of persecution and animosities, and that seems peculiar to our high-church, was the book of sports. High-church having taken a fancy to make it religion to have no sermons on sun-

days in an afternoon ; but, instead thereof, to make the people dance and play, in opposition to puritans and dissenters, who, it seems, were so irreligious as to think that they were obliged to spend their Sunday after divine service was over, in family or private devotion : that book was issued out by authority ; and many godly clergymen were harassed for not reading it, as many laymen were for not turning the holy-day into a play-day.

But to the glory of king George, this priestly atheism of persecution is now vanishing. His majesty began his reign with a noble declaration for toleration, wherein he allows his subjects to have a right to religion and a conscience. The persecution commenced by a high church priest against honest Whiston fell ; and the promoter is defeated of all hopes of getting his charges by a bishoprick. The bishop of Bangor* has preached up the authority of God and Christ before his majesty ; and his majesty (the head of our church, the supreme ordinary, and the sole fountain of all ecclesiastical, as well as civil authority) has preached it to the nation. Some penal laws have been repealed ; wherein our truly Christian prelates had, to their immortal honour, their share. Liberty of examination and debate (which is the most sacred of all principles, as it is the sole foundation of all common sense, truth, and true Christianity) grows upon us. A majority of dissenting ministers, assembled in a synod, have declared for the bible which was never before done by any synod of priests, who have always endeavoured to establish their own or some other human authority. The high-priests dare not plainly excite the mob to burn, plunder and molest their neighbours ; but are in great measure reduced to pulpit and private railing and damning. The sole persecution now on foot, and countenanced by authority, is, that high-church cannot persecute dissenters ; for it is esteemed by some a church-persecution not to be able to persecute others. And lastly, I dare write the independent whig.

O glorious king George ! O the happiness of a nation to be governed by such a monarch ! Of whom I can but observe, that he seems to me the favourite of Heaven, which so blesses all his designs with success, that he need not fear success in any truly virtuous or religious designs. And (that I may use the printed words of Mr. Bold, an excellent divine of our church) “ It is no small encouragement to all, who have any acquaintance with the Christian religion, to rest assured, that God will, in due time, notwithstanding all the machinations and effort of ill people, bring matters in this land to an happy issue, because none are against the government of our most excellent sovereign king George and the protestant succession, but who are also against the Lord Jesus Christ being sole king in his own kingdom, and consequently against his being sole law-giver to, and judge of his own subjects, in matters of conscience, and which relate to their eternal salvation.” C.

* Dr. Benjamin Hoadley.

NUMBER 45.

Of High-Church Atheism. Part 4.

As a further proof of the charge of practical atheism upon high-church priests, I proceed to shew, how they confound and subvert all morality and holiness of life ; which is the main design of all religion, and more particularly of the Christian.

This they do, in the first place, by teaching the most immoral and unholy doctrines, and thereby leading men to actions, in the highest degree, prejudicial to human society.

To do as we would be done unto, and to love our neighbour as ourselves, are moral and Christian principles, of daily and most general use. We cannot converse a moment, without acting agreeably or contrary to them. And the happiness of society consists, in great measure, in the practice of those duties ; as the misery of society consists in their breach. For what is happiness in society, but the prevalency of universal love, and equal favour and justice ? And what greater degree of love can we shew to others, than that love wherewith we love ourselves ? And what can a whole society wish for more, than that equal favour and justice be distributed among them ? And what is misery in society, but malice, and hatred, and partiality ; and their consequences, disorder, confusion and war ?

Now the high priest dogmatizes against these fundamental maxims of morality, whenever he contends against the right of men to judge for themselves in religion, which he pretends to use himself ; whenever he contends for penalties, or discouragements of any kind, against those who differ in opinion from him, which he would not at the same time think just to have inflicted on himself for differing in opinion from them ; whenever he damns men as hereticks and schismatics, in cases where he would not damn himself ; whenever he judges whole sects or bodies of men insincere, (as is his constant method towards dissenters) and would not at the same time be thought insincere himself ; and in fine, whenever he preaches contrary to that love of all men, that forbearance, that forgiveness of injuries, that meekness, that peace and quiet, that beneficence to all in distress, and that charity (the greatest of moral and Christian virtues) which beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things, which is the charity taught in the gospel : All which he cannot but be willing to see prevail in the world, with respect to himself. How often the high priest preaches after this manner ; or rather how seldom he preaches otherwise ; and how successful he is in introducing the practical atheism suited to such doctrines, namely, factions, quarrels, violence, injustice, plundering, partiality, devastation, and murder ; every observer may be satisfied by his own experience.

Rebellion is the actual dissolution of order in a society ; and is ever founded either on the jealousies and ill-grounded animosities of the people in relation to their sovereign, or to one another ; or on supposed defect of title in the sovereign. Now these our high-church

priests promote, and inculcate by their constant lectures of church-peril ; of the sad state of the present times, beyond all that ever were before them ; of their own want of power ; of passive obedience and hereditary right ; and several other favourite factious subjects : And this way they lead the people to rebellion ; and that in breach of oaths, which are the most sacred band of society.

And as the high jacobite priest thus teaches the very worst vices, so nothing recommends a layman to him so much as the practice of them.

2. Secondly, The high-church priest subverts morality and holiness of life, by laying an undue stress on matters of little or no importance ; and thereby engages the thoughts and affections of men about them, to the neglect of morality and that holiness of life, which is the end and design of all religion. For whoever places religion in trifles, will (like the Jews, who were much concerned to pay to the priest tythe of mint annise and cummin) neglect the weightier matters of the law.

What work have we in England ; what hatred, damning, and un-charitableness is there among us, about mere ceremonies and external forms ? And what arguing and zeal is there for imposing them ; when a general agreement in them (as it would be managed) would be so far from being any real use in religion, and tending to peace, that it would be a conspiracy against the rights of mankind, and against that peace and charity, which would otherwise prevail ? For, have not men a right to follow their judgments in matters of religion, and especially in such matters as are allowed to be indifferent in themselves ; and is not that right invaded by imposing upon them ? And would not peace and charity (which, we see, exist not under imposition) prevail, by allowing men to practise as differently as their judgements direct them ; as we see they do prevail in countries of liberty and toleration, in proportion to the degree of liberty and toleration allowed ?

What work is there at this time, how many volumes are there daily published, and how deeply concerned is all England, about certain speculations, whereof the people can understand nothing, and about which the priest confounds himself ? Can the people understand any of the various schemes and hypothesis invented by divines, in relation to the trinity in unity, and the incarnation of God ? Does Dr. Waterland, who is a very learned, acute, and ingenious person, and has writ two great books on this subject, know what he contends for himself, when he expresses the sum of his doctrine of the trinity in unity, in these words, “ that each divine person is an individual intelligent agent ; but, as subsisting in one undivided substance, they are all together, in that respect, but one undivided intelligent agent ? ” That is, one individual is three individuals, one undivided agent is three undivided agents, and one person is three persons ? And can any mortal suppose the people to be in the least concerned about such sophistical chimeras, crabbed notions, bombastick phrases, and solecisms ? And must not zeal about ceremonies, and unintelligible speculations, as much supplant and take the place of morality, as ever rites did among the Jews, or the religious trumpery of the pagans did among them ? Even zeal for truth in certain points, is not of so much importance as is commonly supposed. I have been much pleased with the judiciousness and charity of the following passage in a sermon of the present archbishop of Dublin, the most worthy and truly profound Dr. King:

“ Let us suppose one, who takes all the descriptions we have of God in scripture literally ; who imagines him to be a mighty king that sits in heaven, and has the earth for his footstool ; that at the same time has all things in his view which can happen ? that has thousands and thousands of ministers to attend him, all ready to obey and execute his commands ; that has great love and favour for such as diligently obey his orders, and is in a rage and fury against the disobedient ; could any one doubt but he, who in the simplicity of his heart should believe these things as literally represented, would be saved by virtue of that belief ; or that he would not have motives strong enough to oblige him to love, honour, and worship God ? The imperfections of such representations will never be imputed to us as a fault, provided we do not wilfully dishonour him by unworthy notions and our conceptions of him be such as may sufficiently oblige us to perform the duties he requires at our hands.” The like may be said of a man who has mistaken notions of the trinity in unity, and of the person of Christ ; provided he do not wilfully dishonour God and Christ by his notions, and do not conceive Christ to be a legislator, and a ruler sent from God ; than which conception, nothing can more oblige us to perform the duties, that both God and Christ require of us.

3. Thirdly, There is no crime, but what has, at times, and on certain occasions, the support and encouragement of the popish priest ; as there is no virtue which he does not at times, and on certain occasions, discourage. Let a man be whore-master, or drunkard, or liar, or slanderer, or passionate, or revengeful, or cheat ; and he may meet with fair quarter from the high-priest, be seldom or never reprov'd by him, have his esteem and countenance, and the character of a good churchman from him, and be sure of priestly absolution at last : provided he heartily espouse the interest of the priest, that is, contend for his power and wealth. On the other side, let a man have ever so many virtuous qualities, and let him also be a sincere believer in Jesus Christ : but without the quality of espousing the high popish priest's interest ; and he will never stand so fair in the priest's eyes as the aforesaid prodigal—good—churchman. This conduct of the priest's has a mighty influence on the actions of men, and tends to make them as bad as their inclinations, and temper, dispose them to be ; inasmuch as the general esteem and good name of most men will depend on the characters given of them by the priests, who are the general gossips, and are revered every where for their inward sanctity, their external long gowns and broad brimmed hats, the latter sufficiently manifesting the former. I will not deny, but that the priests had much rather that their followers were virtuous than otherwise ; since they must well know, that credit is to be got by having such men among them, and that the best harvest is to be made of the weakness and superstition of virtuous men. But the bulk of men being vicious, and the virtuous man of sense being in the interest of religion, and against priestcraft ; the aforesaid high-priests are reduced to the necessity of countenancing the vicious, to carry on their own interest with a sufficient party.

4. Fourthly, High-church priests, by the weakness of all popish states (except the commonwealths of Venice and Norcia) and of most of the protestant states, are let into too great a share of the civil governments of Europe ; and thus, by becoming acting politicians, confound all na-

tional, publick, and political morality. For, as the late bishop of Sarum observed, "The priests have a secret to make the natives of a country miserable, in spite of any abundance with which nature has furnished them. They have not souls big enough, and tender enough for government. They have both a narrowness of spirit, and a sourness of mind, that does not agree with the principles of human society. Nor have they those compassions for the miserable, with which wise governours ought to temper all their counsels; for a stern sourness of temper, and an unrelenting hardness of heart, seem to belong to that sort of men. C.

NUMBER 46.

Of High-Church Atheism. Part 5.

SPECULATIVE atheists exist but in few places, and have never been numerous any where: even though all those be accounted such, upon whom atheism has ever been charged. But where they do exist, they seem to me to owe their rise principally to superstition and priestcraft; and the higher the church and priest have been, the more numerous have been the atheists: Nay, there seems to me more just cause to suspect the high-church priests of atheism, than any other men.

1. Whoever reasons himself into atheism, undoubtedly reasons very wrong, and either proceeds on false principles, or makes wrong conclusions from true ones. But among the several false arguments, by which the atheists and loose people impose on themselves, and endeavour to seduce others; there is none more frequently urged, than that the current absurdities and superstitions taught by priests, and the priests hypocrisy and villanies, are sufficient reasons to make all religion be deemed a cheat, and priests of all religion to be deemed the same. The poet says, in the person of a libertine.

——We know their holy jugglings,
Things that would startle faith, and make us deem,
Not this, or that, but all religions false.

This indeed is pitiful reasoning, and ought to be extended no farther than to those doctrines and priests, against whom the objections lie. But so it is men reason; and experience will prove, that 'tis the high-church priest, and his proceedings, which make the atheist. But before I proceed to that experience, I will say this in behalf of this argument for atheism, that the evil apparent in the world (which some urge as an argument against the existence of a deity) seems to be most visible in the actions of priests, who do, in my opinion, create the greatest disorder among men.

The late bishop of Sarum tells us, in his travels, "That a man of quality at Rome, and an eminent churchman, said to him, that it was a

le scandal to the whole Christian world, and made one doubt of
 ath of the Christian religion, to see more oppression and cruelty
 in territories, than was to be found even in Turkey. He says,
 physicians in Naples are brought under the scandal of atheism :
 it is certain, that in Italy men of searching understandings, who
 have no other idea of the Christian religion, but that which they see
 ed among them, are very naturally tempted to disbelieve it quite ;
 by believing it all alike in gross, without distinction, and finding
 notorious cheats as appear in many parts of their religion, are,
 that, induced to disbelieve the whole." And it is an observation

Geddes, that there are more people of no religion in Italy, than
 the world besides, (tracts, Vol. 3.) England is also said by our
 church priests, to abound with atheists, no less than Italy. But
 if we see such people among us, they are entirely owing to the con-
 fidence of some of our priests, who, I will be so bold as to affirm, are as
 confident in their pretences to power and authority, as the Italian
 dare to be. This, though at first sight it may seem matter of
 astonishment, that they should be so in such an enlightened country as
 England, where so many understand right reason and true Christianity ;
 is natural enough, if it be considered, that it is the last struggle of
 the church for popery and slavery : they contend for the most ridiculous
 doctrines, as necessary to salvation ; and by their prevarications about
 and shiftings about doctrines, according to their interest, dispose
 us to make the same inference, as the men of quality, and the men of
 sound understanding do in Italy. And some among us may, per-
 haps, make the atheistical inference, considering how the nation had
 managed in the high-church reign of king Charles the second,
 the design, according to the late bishop of Sarum, seemed to be
 to make us first atheists, that we might more easily be papists.

Hickes tells us, that the practices of the swearing clergy, since
 the revolution, who had preached passive obedience before, " have
 set loose and unprincipled men to turn atheists ; and that those
 have set open the flood-gates to that deluge of atheism and impi-
 ety at now overflows the nation." And he cites another author with
 approbation, for saying " This change has made many sober men
 infidel, and gone farther towards eradicating all the notions of a dei-
 ty than all the labours of Mr. Hobbes. I have been ready to suspect,
 that religion itself was a cheat ; and others, of my own knowledge,
 have been the same temptations to question religion itself."

Lesley says, " The carriage of the clergy in the revolution, has
 given greater occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, and
 has driven more men from the church of England, to the church of Rome,
 than to atheism ; has overturned, ruined, divided, and dishonour-
 ed the church more, than if that persecution, which some feared or pre-
 dicted, had fallen upon them. He says, the clergy banter and mock
 at his face ; and that atheism is a smaller sin than this, since it is
 to have no God at all, than to set up one, to laugh at him ; and
 the greatest danger to which we are now exposed, by the defect of
 many of our clergy, is a contempt of all religion, which is now
 spread over the land, in a manner unheard of in former ages."

Finally, the late bishop of Sarum tells us, that since his conversation
 with Wilnot, earl of Rochester, he had had many occasions to dis-

course with people tainted with wicked principles ; and, says he, I do affirm, that the greatest prejudice those persons have at religion, at the clergy, and at the publick worship of God, is this, that they say they see clergymen take oaths, and use all prayers, both ordinary and extraordinary, for the government, and yet in their actings and discourses, and of late in their sermons, they shew visibly that they look another way ; from whence they conclude, that they are a mercenary sort of people, without conscience."

2. Atheism being, in my opinion, a most unnatural thing, and a crime, which, for its madness as well as guilt, ought to shut a man out of civil society, I am not disposed to lay it to any man's charge, though a vicious person ; much less to any sober man's, without his open profession of it, or an evident proof of it upon him. But if consistently with charity, we may suspect any men of atheism, who deny themselves to be atheists, we may certainly suspect such priests, who live viciously ; who play with oaths ; who, though swearing to the government, are jacobites in their hearts, (as Dr. Hickeys says, I hope falsely, the main body of the clergy, God be thanked, are ;) who are uncharitable in their censures, and are persecutors ; who defend plain absurdities ; who dispute against the reasonableness of reason ; who contend for human authority, that is, their own, in matters of religion ; and argue for the belief of unintelligible propositions or mysteries : (for, men of common sense and common honesty, can hardly be supposed to join real belief and such things together.) And above all, those priests are to be suspected as atheists, who are constantly charging others with atheism, and those oftentimes the most learned, best, and most religious men, as Cudworth, Tillotson, and Locke. Upon such we may justly return the charge of atheism, in the words of a modern philosopher : " How," says he to a high-presbyterian priest, " could you think me an atheist, unless it were, because finding your doubts of the deity more frequent than other men's are, you are thereby the apter to fall upon that kind of reproach ! Wherein you are like women of poor and evil education, when they scold ; amongst whom the readiest disgraceful word is whore. Why not thief, or any other ill name, but because when they remember themselves, they think that reproach the likeliest to be true ?"

And, as many priests give such cause of suspicion, so I would fain know what Mr. Lesley must esteem the priests of our church to be, when he says, " That the parliament cannot make an oath which the clergy will not take ? And whether many of our clergy must not be esteemed atheists, according to the saying of the late bishop of Worcester. It was a great providence of God, that so many of the clergy refused the oaths to the government, lest people should think there was no such thing as religion, and incline to atheism ?" And lastly, what can be thought of the majority of a lower house of convocation, who, in their representation of the present state of religion, with regard to the late excessive growth of infidelity, heresy, and profaneness, fell upon the truly religious (though erroneous) books of Mr. Whiston and others, but passed over the tale of a tub, a book of a reverend brother ; though that book was the sole open attack that had been made upon Christianity since the revolution, except the oracles of reason : and was not inferior in banter and malice to the attacks of Celsus, or Julian, or Porphyry, or Lucian ? And what can we think of the majority

of another convocation, which a worthy member spoke to in these words? "With what face or conscience, Mr. Prolocutor, can we offer to complain of the licentiousness taken by lay-writers, and yet connive at the like offences given by the ministers of our church; I doubt greater offences? For if all the ill books against religion, scripture, &c. were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by clergymen, even of the most prophane drollery, as well as the most serious heresy?" So that, upon the whole, the high-church priests seem to me to derive a mighty benefit from atheism. They have it chiefly among themselves, and protect one another in it; and thereby have the profit of atheism, arising from taking false oaths, and from doing many things without scruple of conscience; as also the pleasure, as some of them esteem it, (see Dr. Atterbury's sermon at Bennet's funeral) arising from the practice of vice. And at the same time they themselves stand clear of the imputation of atheism, and brand with it, those whom they do not like, and such as are oftentimes the best men and best Christians. C.

P. S. The author of this paper having received two very modest and religious, though anonymous letters, which take offence at an expression in the Independent Whig, No. 38, about godly sorrow; returns for answer, that sorrow for our sins is not there opposed, but mechanick sorrow, and such as proceeds from wrong causes; and the author only supposes that such enthusiastick people, as he has before mentioned, knew not the true principles of repentance, which he himself has described.

In fine, as to godly sorrow, sorrow for sin; I know it to be so much a religious duty, that I know there can be no religion without it.



NUMBER 47.

No Priests Instituted by the Christian Religion.

I WILL, in this paper, shew, that there are no priests or sacrificers in the gospel-dispensation, in any other sense, than as every Christian may be called so, as he offers up to God the sacrifices of praises and thanksgivings, and a pure and contrite heart; and, in this respect, St. Peter calls all Christians, a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, God's heritage, or more properly, God's clergy.

It is undoubtedly true, that all power, superiority, or distinction amongst men, must be derived either from the positive institutions of God, or the consent and agreement of one another; and therefore, whoever demands any authority over others, their goods or possessions, must support his pretences by such proof as the nature and importance of the claim requires; and it must be very glaring and undeniable,

when it is levelled at the temporal and eternal happiness of all mankind.

It is a severe circumstance, which attends those, who oppose received opinions, that they must not only contend against popular prejudices, and notions long imbibed, against the interests and passions of great numbers of artful and combining men, but in most countries against the weight and force of public authority. The labouring oar too will always lie upon you: You must disprove what has no proof to support it, and bring clouds of arguments to maintain propositions that are really self-evident; a bare possibility that you may be mistaken, shall be deemed a full conviction; and sometimes the clearest demonstration on your side, shall be called only carnal and human knowledge, not to be used about spiritual things; and even when the irrefragable strength of your reasoning forces consent, you will have no thanks for your pains, but will be esteemed officious and factious, and be said to disturb points already settled, if by chance you should escape the censure of promoting the cause of deism or atheism.

However, these claims in the popish and popishly-affected clergy are so enormous, the consequences of them so fatal to Christianity, and the arguments pretended to be brought from reason and authority for their support, so weak and contemptible; the whole design and current of the gospel being directly against them: that I shall do my utmost totally to demolish and throw down the tottering building, and shew that it has no foundation in common sense or Scripture.

No proposition can be more evident, than that, before any positive institution, every man must have been his own priest, and alone must have offered up his own prayers and thanksgivings; but when God Almighty instituted the Jewish dispensation, which consisted of numerous rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices, he also appointed persons to officiate and execute these duties for the people as well as for themselves, who were called priests or sacrificers, with particular salaries or dues annexed to their office, and they were to be only chosen out of one tribe.

Accordingly in the epistle to the Hebrews, chap. 5, v. 1, and chap. 8, v. 3, a high priest is defined as one taken up from amongst men, and ordained for men in things pertaining to God; that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins: So that the business of the priesthood was for expiating sin, and reconciling men to God, by offering gifts and sacrifices: And the Apostle adds, verse the 4th, That no man could take this honour to himself, but he which was called of God, as was Aaron, whose commission was couched in the plainest and most express words imaginable, and the peoples duty and obedience were prescribed even to the minutest circumstance.

As the Jewish rites and ceremonies were almost endless, and consisted of so many minute particulars, that it was next to impossible not to commit some breaches of their law, therefore God appointed atonement to be made for the lesser transgressions of it, by gifts and offerings, and the persons aforesaid to make those offerings; but for the greater sins, such as idolatry, perjury, murder, adultery, breaking their sabbath, &c. no sin offerings or expiatory sacrifices were allowed; and for this reason the Apostle, chap. 7, v. 18, 19, argues, that there is verily a disannulment of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof: for the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in a better hope did, by the which we draw nigh unto God.

He adds, chap. 9, v. 9, That gifts and sacrifices could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience. And chap. x, v. 4, That it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. And v. 6, 8, That in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sins, God has no pleasure : and he argues from thence, chap. 5, v. 4, 10, and chap. 7, from the 11th v. to the 19th, a necessity that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedeck, which was an higher order, and that he should be perfect (being to become author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him :) for if perfection was in the Levitical priesthood (under which the people received the law) what need was there that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedeck, and not after the order of Aaron ; for the priesthood being changed, there is made a necessity of the change also of the law.

And then he observes many differences between our Saviour's and the Jewish priesthood.

1. That this priest was not made after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

2. That he was made a priest, not without an oath, which the Jewish priests were not, v. 20, 21.

3. That there were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue, by reason of death ; but this man, because he continueth, hath an unchangeable priesthood : wherefore he is able to save them to the utmost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, v. 23, 24, 25.

4. That the law maketh men high-priests which have infirmity ; but such a high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, who needeth not daily to offer up sacrifices, first for his own sins, and then for the people ; for this he did once, when he offered up himself, v. 26, 27, 28.

5. That he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much he is mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises ; for if the covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second ; for finding fault with them, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts, and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, saying, know the Lord, for all shall know me from the greatest to the least ; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities I will remember no more ; in that he saith, by a new covenant he hath made the first old, and that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away, chap. viii. ver. 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and chap. x. ver. 16, 17.

6. In chap. ix. the apostle compares the rites and bloody sacrifices of the law, and shews how far inferiour they are to the blood and sacrifice of Christ, who not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entered at once into the holy place, having obtained external redemption for us ; for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal spirit, offered himself, without blot, to God, to purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God ? v. 12, 13, 14.

7. In Chap. 10, he shews the weakness of the law-sacrifices ; which being offered up year by year continually, could not make the comers thereto perfect, for then they would have ceased to have been offered, because that the worshippers, once purged, should have had no more conscience of sins. Ver. 1, 2, Then said he, Lo I come to do thy will, O God : He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second ; by the which will we are sanctified, through the offering of Jesus Christ, once for all. Every priest standing ministering, and offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins ; but this man, after he offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever set down at the right hand of God ; for by one offering he hath perfected for ever, them that are sanctified ; that is, those who obey his commands, v. 9, 10, 11, 12, 14. And in v. 18, he tells them, where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sins.

In the rest of the chapter, the Apostle exhorts the Hebrews, whom he calls his brethren, to have the boldness to enter in with him into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus ; and having a high-priest over the house of God, to draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, and to hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering ; and to consider one another to provoke unto love, and to good works ; not forsaking the assembling ourselves together, as the manner of some is ; but exhorting one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching. And he enforces his argument, by telling them, that if we sin wilfully after the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.

Now in all this epistle, where this matter is so fully and at large explained, (as well as in many other parts of Scripture where the Jewish priesthood, rites and ceremonies are plainly abolished) there is not one word or hint given of any other to be established upon the ruins of it. In all the chapters which I have quoted, no priest, sacrificer, prophet, mediator, intercessor, reconciler, benedictor, ambassador, or spiritual prince, is once mentioned, but Jesus Christ alone ; though one might have expected to have met with him, or to have heard of him here, if there was to have been any such person in nature. On the contrary, the Apostle himself addresses to the Hebrews as his equals, and claims no right, privilege, or superiority over them ; talks to them always in the plural number ; nor does he, in the modern phrase, say, pray ye, &c. but joins himself with them in every act of love and duty.

If this was the case of the Hebrews, who were parties to the Horeb contract, by which God became their temporal king ; and consequently, they became bound, and subjects to all the laws of Moses ; the argument is much stronger in behalf of the gentiles, who were never any way concerned in the Jewish priesthood, rites and ceremonies : and there must be therefore a very plain and positive institution and establishment found out in scripture, before they can be subjected to it.

T.

NUMBER 48.

All Priestly power inconsistent with the Gospel, and renounced by it.

I HAVE fully shewn, in my last paper, that as there is but one sacrifice in the Christian religion, so there is but one sacrificer or priest, who, as our church declares in the communion-service, made one oblation of himself, and once offered up a full, perfect, sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; and agreeably to this declaration, in the 13th article, she calls the sacrifices of the popish priests, dangerous deceits, and blasphemous fables.

I cannot with my best enquiry find out, that in the whole Christian religion, there are any new rites and ceremonies appointed, or any offices erected; nor in the gospels, acts or epistles, does any thing like an institution occur, except that of deacons; which office is now quite laid aside, unless it may be said to be revived by virtue of the act of queen Elizabeth, which appoints overseers of the poor: for as to the modern ecclesiastical deacon, he has no resemblance to the scripture-officer, who was appointed to serve tables, upon complaint of the Grecian widows, who were neglected in the daily ministration, which the apostles were not at leisure to attend, because of the preaching of the word, and therefore directed the congregation to choose others, whose business it should be. Acts chap. vi.

I shall therefore enquire how the popish world came to be blessed with such a long train of spiritual equipage; and see what can be found in the scriptures, to warrant or countenance their present pretensions. In order to it, I shall observe, that promulgation is of the essence of a law, which cannot be without plainness and perspicuity: It must not be expressed in doubtful and equivocal terms: It must not depend upon critical learning, or different readings; nor receive its explanation from the mysterious gibberish, and unintelligible jargon of the schools; but ought to be such, as a plain, open, simple-hearted, sincere man may easily discover, amidst the numerous and contradictory schemes of the ecclesiasticks.

Weak and corrupt men may, through ignorance or design, frame and enact laws obscure and unintelligible; but the Almighty cannot intend to mislead his creatures, or want proper words to express his meaning: Even such human laws as enact penalties, or restrain the natural liberty of mankind, are always construed strictly, and extended no farther than the letter expressly warrants; and it is much more reasonable that it should be so understood in divine laws, upon which the temporal and eternal happiness of all the world depends; not only because of the importance of the subject, but as there can be no unwary omission, or defect in words chosen by the Holy Ghost: We may therefore be very sure, that whatever is not expressed in scripture, plain and clear to common understandings, was not intended for our instruction, or can become a duty.

With our eyes thus cleared up, we will view those texts and parts of holy writ, brought together to support this unwieldy fabrick. And

here, for some time, I must beg leave of my reader, to stand amazed, and be at a loss, which most to admire, the stupidity and acquiescence of the popish and popishly-affected laity, or the daring insolence and impiety of their ecclesiasticks ; that without reason, or the appearance of reason without scripture, or the colour of scripture, but directly in defiance of them both, they could be able to form so complete an empire over the bodies and minds of the greatest part of Christendom ; rob them of their goods and possessions, and make them instruments of their own ruin, hug their chains, and mortally hate, murder, or ruin every one who would set them free.

But before I enter upon a particular disquisition of the texts produced, I would first enquire what benefit can accrue to Christianity, by such powers in the Christian clergy. A Roman judge is honourably mentioned by Cicero, for always asking *cui bono* (for what end or advantage) an alledged action was done ; by which he could make some judgement whether it was done or not, and who did it. The same is a reasonable proceeding in this case ; for though it be no objection to the truth of what God has said, that it is not agreeable to the sentiments of weak men ; yet whilst it remains a question, whether God said it or not, there cannot be a stronger way of arguing used, than to shew that it is unworthy of the divine wisdom and goodness, who can say nothing which is trifling and impertinent, or make any ordinances useless or mischievous to his creatures.

Nothing can come from God, but what is god-like ; and therefore when any number of men combining together, dare tell me any thing in his name, of no use to religion or virtue, and yet of apparent advantage to themselves or their order ; I shall always believe it to be an invention of their own, forged to gratify their ambition and avarice, and shall ever vindicate the Almighty from the imputed calumny.

Now of what use is it to religion and virtue, that the clergy should always make one another ? Whether the imposition of hands be esteemed barely a ceremony, to denote a person appointed to an office, or be the appointment itself ? Or whether he be chosen by laying on of hands, or by any other ceremony ? Will the same person, with the same qualifications, be a better man, better Christian, or abler divine, if he receive his orders in a direct line from the apostles, through the canal of a popish, high-church, or presbyterian priesthood, or if only from the civil magistrate, or voluntary societies ? Or is it possible to believe, that whilst he is administering the offices of religion, and doing the duties of the gospel, the devout Christian people shall lose the effects of their piety, and the benefits of Christ's promises, for the defect of any circumstance, or any omission or superfluity in his adoption ; things which they could neither prevent nor know ? Sure we have not so learned Christ.

Can we suppose that Almighty God should make such an establishment of Christianity, as must destroy Christianity itself ; and put it under the sole guidance and direction of a society of men, who will have a perpetual interest to overturn or pervert it, and ever did so when they had power.

What can be suggested more absurd, than that the good God should send his Son from heaven to teach virtue and goodness to men, to manumit and set them free from the superstitions of the Jews, and

the idolatries of the gentiles : who, whilst upon earth, should not only disclaim all power and dominion himself, but suffer an ignominious death, to make mankind happy ; and yet subject them to a yoke, the most arbitrary and tyrannical in the world, without redress, without remedy ; where the governours have constant temptations and motives to oppress, and the governed no means to resist or oppose ? For no less than this are the popish and high-church demands upon us, and the inevitable consequences of their wild and wicked hypothesis.

If they are an order of men appointed directly by God, and have the government of the church by divine right in all things, which relate to spirituals, (that is, in all things wherein their own interest is concerned ; If they are to be sole judges of their own powers, and what doctrines they are to teach ; if the people are to receive them implicitly, and to submit to and be concluded by their determinations, and if no human authority must controul them ; which I think those whom I write against, all claim ; (though scarce two of them agree in whose hands, or in what part of the clergy, these powers are vested) then it is plain, that they are possessed of the most despotick, unlimited, and uncontrollable sovereignty in the universe, and which of necessity must prove, and actually ever has proved, the most cruel and tyrannical in the exercise.

But if they have not this power, they can have none at all, but what the civil magistrate or voluntary societies trust them with ; for, what is the name of a power, which every man is a judge whether he will submit to or not ? Or how can that be said to be divine, which the civil magistrate can controul at his pleasure ? There can be no medium in nature betwixt another's judging for me, and my judging for myself : if another be to judge for me, I must submit to his determinations, let them be ever so absurd, monstrous or wicked ; but if I have a right to re-examine them, they can amount to no more than advice, and my own judgement alone must determine me.

As I think I have amply proved that it is inconsistent with the goodness of God to trust the powers so claimed with the popish clergy ; so in my two next papers, I will as fully prove, that, in fact, he has given them no authority at all.

Indeed, to do them right, the popish priests do not pretend to offer any direct texts to their purpose, expressing particularly the powers given them, and the persons in whom they are to be vested ; as might be reasonably expected in a case so nearly affecting the liberties of mankind ; and as was actually done in the Jewish dispensation, where every circumstance relating to their worship and the priest's office, was minutely described ; but instead thereof, they pick up scattered and disjointed sentences, and set them together by the ears, to try what they can get by the scuffle. They argue from types, antitypes, parables, metaphors, allegories, allusions, inferences, patterns, resemblances, figures and shadows, and by such means can fetch every thing out of every thing.

The bible is a miscellaneous book, from whence crazed or designing men, by joining or disjoining ; by various readings, corrupt or ignorant translations ; by far-fetched interpretations, and putting different meanings upon words in scripture from what they signify in any other parts of language ; by trifling and knavish distinctions, met-

aphysical subtilties, no definitions, but shifting the signifi- words as they have occasion; by references to ancient cus- twenty other theological systems of reasoning, may always terials to serve their loose or wicked purposes; as we actual hundred different, and many of them almost contradictory, are pretended to be deduced from that book; and if the pr let alone, they would find a thousand more, and burn for tl mean other people.) But if men would be contented to ju gospel style, by the same rule as they do of other writing: could be persuaded that God Almighty, when he condescend use of human language, intends to be understood, and con uses words in their common acceptation; that when he di reveal his will to babes and sucklings, (that is, to the ignorar learned) he did not choose to do it in riddles, to make way preters, and that the popish clergy might have a pretence in the laity's pockets; then I affirm, that the bible is the plain est, most moral, significant, and intelligible book in the wor things which can be the duty of a man to know; and in no more so, than in the present dispute, which has been render plexed and intricate by craft and artifice. And I underta two next papers to make this out.

NUMBER 49.

The same subject continued.

THERE is nothing in the four gospels to authorize or con- the distinction of ecclesiastical and civil; for as our Saviour r all worldly power himself, so he gave none. He neither use lowed the use of force and violence, to coerce and conquer s his kingdom, which he declared was not of this world. As th which he taught was not to consist of outward actions and ce like the worship of the Gentiles, but was to reside in the mi chose proper means to attain his end: He knew that the swi make hypocrites and slaves, but never converts; he therefore ed his Apostles to win mens affection by love and gentleness, them by example, and convince them by the reasonableness of cepts, and he enabled them to prove their mission by wonder acles; all which are directly contrary to the proceedings of l whose aim was temporal dominion, and his religion impost consequently violence was necessary to propagate both: for a can no way be supported but by tyranny; but truth can eve itself, and desires nothing but a fair examination, a free hearit qual favour.

He takes every occasion to caution his Apostles against pride, and claiming superiority over others, or one another: 7

ers which he gave them were of another kind, such as were proper to overcome the prejudices of the innocent and well-meaning, though misled people ; and to confound the malice and subtilty of the governing priesthood, namely, a power against unclean spirits, and to cast them out ; to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases ; and to raise the dead. Sure no clergyman pretends to these powers.

He bids them provide neither silver nor gold, nor brass, in their pockets ; nor scrip for their journey ; neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staves : Much less coaches. I presume that no clergyman desires these powers.

He orders them when they come into any house, to salute it ; and if they do not receive them, and hear their words, to depart from that house, and shake off the dust of their feet. The Popish clergy are for setting fire to such an house, (as they did lately to several) and for burning and damning every one within it.

The Apostle's commission was to preach Christ to all nations, in Matthew ; and in Mark, to go into all the world, and to preach him to every creature. The Popish priest stays at home, and preaches himself only, to his own parish for money.

Those who believed in the Apostles, and were baptized, had the power of casting out Devils in Christ's name, and speaking with new tongues : They could take up serpents ; no deadly thing they drank could hurt them ; they laid hands upon the sick, and they recovered. Those who believe in the Popish priest, are the best friends that the Devil has ; and instead of casting him out, for the most part bring him in : They can speak sense with no tongue ; nor dare venture on any poison, but what proceeds from gluttony and drunkenness, with which they give their votaries diseases, instead of recovering them.

The Apostles were to be witnesses of all which they had heard or seen said or done by our Saviour ; and who else could be so ? But the Popish priest has no other means of knowing Christ, than any layman of equal abilities and equal application ; nor can have any greater motive or inducement to preach him, except his hire ; which, as it first suborned his predecessors to betray his person, and take away his life, so it has ever since been the occasion of crucifying him a-new, by misrepresenting his doctrines, and making them subservient to worldly ambition and interest ; a practice so universal, that no Englishman can set his foot out of his own country, but he sees the clergy perverting the Scripture, and abusing the people.

Our Saviour himself appointed the seventy disciples, whom he sent before him two by two, in every place where he intended himself to go, and gave them powers almost equal to the powers of the Apostles, even to heal the sick, to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and that nothing should hurt them ; but he was so far from giving any worldly authority, that he tells them, he sends them forth as lambs amongst wolves ; that they should carry nothing with them, but whatsoever house they came into, they should say, peace to that house, and should eat and drink such things as the people gave them ; and whatever city they came into, they should eat such things as were set before them, for the labourer is worthy of his hire ; (here it seems the people were to judge what wages and hire they deserve) and if any persons refused to receive them, they were to go into the

streets, and shake off the dust of their feet at them ; which was all an excommunication that they were directed to use, and was nothing at all but to leave them in their sins, and preach to them no longer.

Whatever is meant by the figurative and abstruse texts of binding and loosing, remitting and retaining sins, is evidently confined to the case it is spoken to, and seems to have relation to the other world alone.

Now I would be glad to know by what rules of construction can the powers, now claimed by any set of clergy in the world, be brought from these texts, or in what sense can any clergyman be said to be successor of the Apostles, more than every layman of equal qualifications.

If our Saviour had intended to have conveyed down any powers to any man, or set of men whatsoever, it is impossible to believe but he would have expressed himself in the fullest and most significant words, and left no doubt behind him what those powers were, and to what they belonged. No statute enacted amongst weak mortals is penned so loosely : What lawyer in Westminster-hall could have found out sovereign power in the precept, feed my sheep ? Or in our Saviour's promise to assist the Apostles, and perhaps all Christians in general, these words, *I will be with you to the end of the world ?*

The priests of Delphos uttering, for the most part, their oracles in sorry and balderdash poetry, gave rise to a waggonish jest amongst the ancients, that Homer could write better verses than Apollo, who inspired him. But sure no one among Christians will be so prophane, as to give occasion to the suggestion, that the Attorney-General can draw a clearer and more intelligible commission than the Apostles.

But though there be nothing in the gospels to justify or excuse the priestly demands upon the laity, yet there are many texts expressly against them, in which our Saviour disclaims all authority over men, and forbids his disciples and followers assuming superiority over the brethren, or censuring, judging, or using any one ill, for not receiving or for opposing them.

In Luke the 12th, v. 13, A man desires of our Saviour to speak to his brother to divide his inheritance with him, and his answer is, *Who made me a judge, or a divider over you ?*

In John, Chap. 12, v. 47, 48, our Saviour declares, If any man hear his words, and believes not, that he will not judge him ; for he can not to judge the world, but to save the world. And in the next verse leaves him to the judgment of the father, and tells him what will be his doom.

In John, Chap. 18, v. 36, he was brought before Pilate for speaking treason against Cæsar, and claiming the temporal kingdom of Judæa ; and he took that occasion to renounce all earthly sovereignty, by declaring, his kingdom was not of this world, and gave his reason for it, which so satisfied the Roman Governor, ever jealous of his master's authority, that he pronounced him innocent, and would gladly have released him, if the Jewish priests would have suffered it.

In Matthew, Chap. 7, v. 1, 2, 3, he says to his disciples, Judge not lest ye be judged ; for with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged, and what measure ye mete shall be measured to you again, &c.

In Luke, Chap. 9, v. 53, James and John desired of him, that they might command fire from heaven to punish the Samaritans for not

oblivion him ; which he was so far from consenting to, that he reproves them for it ; and tells them, ye know not what spirit ye are of, for the son of man is not come to destroy the world, but to save the world.

In the same chapter, John said to him, master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and we forbid him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said, forbid him not, for he that is not against us, is for us. A plain precept for Christians to tolerate one another.

Through the whole 18th chapter of Matthew, our Saviour exhorts his disciples to be humble, and to forgive offences. And in the 15th verse tells them, if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone ; but if he will not hear thee, take one or two more with thee, &c. and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it to the church, or congregation : And if he neglect to hear the church, let him be to thee like an Heathen or Publican ; that is have no more to do with him. And in the two verses after, he tells them what a church is, namely, when two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be in the midst of them ; and his presence, methinks, should be effectual to constitute a complete church, though a parson is not one of the company.

Indeed the whole New-Testament is a lesson of humility, humanity and morality ; the sermon upon the Mount is nothing else ; and we every where find constant precepts and cautions against pride and domination.

In the 18th of Matthew, our Saviour spake to the multitude, and to his disciples, bidding them not to be called master, for one is your Master, even Christ, all ye are brethren ; but he that is greatest amongst you, shall be your servant ; and whoever does exalt himself, shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted.

In Luke Chap. 20, v. 46, he warns his disciples to beware of the Scribes, who desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief places at feasts, (hear, O ye Popish bishops, priests and deacons !) who devour widows houses, and for a shew make long prayers.

In Luke 22, v. 24, 25, 26, 'There was a strife amongst the Apostles which should be the greatest. And Jesus said unto them, the Kings of the Gentiles exercise authority over them ; and they that exercise authority upon them, are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so ; but he that is greatest amongst you, let him be as the younger ; and he that is chief, as he that does serve. The same in Matthew, chap. 20, v. 25, 26, 27. And he enforces this precept in verse 28, from his own conduct, even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.

Our Saviour did not, like others, preach doctrines to his disciples which he refused to practise, but teaches them modesty and humility by his own example : For in the 13th of John he washes their feet himself, and bids them wash one another's. How different is this from the proud spirit of his pretended successors, who take the place of the nobility and gentry, and make the great men of the earth kiss their slippers ; salute them upon the knee, as if they were Gods below, or Sovereign Princes ; nay more set themselves above the crown itself ; for what is it else they mean after saying grace, and in their cups, by putting the church (by which they mean themselves) before the

king and royal family ? We all know too well their kindness for the people (who are the Scriptural and legal church) to suspect that they mean them.

Not many years since, the constant health amongst them was, king, queen, and church ; but now all the high clergy are guilty of the same crime for which cardinal Woolsey ought to have lost, and in all likelihood would have lost his head, if he had not prevented it, as it is said, by self-murder, even the crime of setting themselves above the crown, and *viva voce*, crying out, *ego & rex meus*, when they are in the humour of owning him as such. T.

NUMBER 45.

An Inquiry into Religious establishments, with a further confutation of the impious and absurd claims of High Priests.

So various and contradictory are the opinions and reasonings of men, that no voluntary society or assembly can act, or long hold together, without establishing certain rules and orders amongst themselves, regarding the common interests and conduct of the society, and appointing persons whose duty it shall be, to see those orders put in execution ; and if any member does not think it lawful or expedient to submit to the publick regulations, they must have a right to exclude him, or in other words, to excommunicate him from their body, if he do not choose to separate himself.

If the design of the meeting be to worship God, to join in the same prayers, and for exhortation and edification, (which assembly is called a church) there must be time and place appointed when, and where, they are to meet, and persons to prepare and keep in order all things necessary for their meeting : There must be one, or more, appointed to read those prayers to the congregation ; in which they are to join, and to do all those offices, which can be performed only by single persons and if the society would avoid the loquacity and interruption of ignorant and conceited members, they must confine exhortation to one, or to a few persons of approved gravity and wisdom. There must be also some means of conferring and agreeing together, to support the common expences of buildings, repairs, utensils, &c. and consequently, there must be debates, which cannot well be carried on without a president, chairman, or prolocutor, to regulate them, collect their voices, and pronounce their resolutions ; without which precautions they will be more likely to fight than pray.

If several of these churches, residing at too great a distance from one another to meet together, should esteem it thier duty or advantage to join in the same form of worship, and unite in a common interest to support it, they must find out some means of communication, and contrive

some cement of their union, otherwise they would soon separate again : This may be done by choosing deputies to represent them, and to concert common measures, or by submitting themselves to the conduct and determinations of one, or more persons, chosen by common consent, in all such matters as do not interfere with their duty to God ; and the persons so chosen can have no more power, nor of longer duration, than their principals think fit to give them.

If these churches think it their duty or interest to enlarge their bottom, and make converts, they cannot take a more effectual method to do it, than to choose, appoint, or ordain discreet and honest men, who are acquainted with their way of worship, their ordinances, and the reasons of them, and send them forth to teach, persuade, and convince others ; to exhort them with meekness and love, (the likeliest way to gain them) and afterwards to preside and watch over them, and thereby prevent their straying and apostatizing.

This was the case in the beginnings of Christianity, before national churches were established, as well as the present case of independent, voluntary societies. The apostles' commission was, to go into all the world, and preach Christ to every creature. This was impossible for them to do in their own persons ; and therefore as they made converts, they exhorted them to convert others, as Acts viii. v. 1, 4. When the apostles were left at Jerusalem, the church was scattered abroad through all Judæa and Samaria, and those who were scattered abroad preached the word. Acts xi. v. 13, 14. They that were scattered abroad upon the persecution that arose about Stephen, travelled as far as Phœnice and Cyprus, and preached the word to none but the Jews only ; and some of them when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus Christ, chap. iv. v. 4. Peter and John converted five thousand. And v. 31. They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness.

And they were all enabled to prove their mission, by having the power of working miracles ; for Mark xvi. v. 17, 18, these signs were to follow those who believed in Christ's name. They could cast out devils ; they could speak with new tongues ; they could take up serpents ; no deadly thing could hurt them ; they could lay their hands on the sick, and recover them. John, chap. xxiv. v. 12. Our Saviour says to his disciples, whoever believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do, and greater than these shall he do : Which gifts would have been unnecessary, if they had been to have made no use of them ; and by virtue of these general powers given to all Christians, Phillip and Stephen, who were chosen by the congregation to the menial office of serving tables, preached, baptized, and did many wonders and miracles, Acts, chap. vi. v. 8. chap. viii. v. 7.

But besides the common right which every man had to preach Christ, and propagate his kingdom, the apostle prevailed with particular persons to undertake it, and make it their business, who were to assist and oversee the brethren, as a shepherd does his sheep : Having the gift of discerning spirits, they knew who were fittest for the employment, and who would engage in it without any sinister views ; but 'tis plain, they gave no gifts or advantages to them above other Christians. They could not give the Holy Ghost ; which power was con-

fin'd to the apostles alone, and as far as appears, was bestowed without distinction upon all who believed and were baptized.

The power of speaking with tongues, as is abovesaid, was given to all believers ; which appears to be in scripture, one constant and inseparable mark of having received the Holy Ghost.

In Acts the 2d, v. 4. The Holy Ghost fell on the apostles, and they spake with tongues. In Acts x. v. 46. While Peter spoke, the Holy Ghost fell on all who heard the word, and the Jews were astonished when they heard the gentiles speak with tongues. Chap. xix. v. 6, Paul lays his hands on certain disciples, and the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied. Acts the xith. v. 15, Peter justifying himself to the Jews, for preaching to the gentiles, says, and as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost ; for as much therefore as God gave them (namely, those who believed) the like gift as he did to us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I should withstand God ? so that here, from the mouth of Peter himself we have it, that the gentiles who believed, had the same gift as the apostles. Chap. viii. v. 14. When the apostles at Jerusalem had heard that the Samaritans had received the word, they sent to them Peter and John, who laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost, which they had not received before, though they were baptized by Philip. In chap. ii, v. 38. Peter says to them of Israel, repent, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost ; and v. 41. They gladly received the word, and the same day were added to them about three thousand souls, who must have all consequently received the Holy Ghost. Chap. viii. v. 8, 9. Paul speaking of the gentiles, says, God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us, and put no difference between them and us, purifying their hearts by faith.

Therefore it appears plain to me, that all who believed, especially by the apostles ministration, received the Holy Ghost, and could do miracles ; and consequently, the persons aforesaid, by whatever names they are called, were not designed to be an order of men distinct from other Christians, with different powers and privileges. They undertook a burthen, not a command. They were better and poorer than other people, not their lords and masters ; nor is there a word in scripture, whereby we can guess that they were intended to be successors to the apostles, much less that the successorship was to continue to the end of the world ; and 'tis evident in fact, that there were no such appointed, because the power of giving the Holy Ghost, and in consequence of doing miracles, soon ceased in the church.

With this view, let us now examine the acts and epistles, and see what there is which contradicts it.

Acts xiv. v. 23, Paul and Barnabas ordained elders in every city ; and chap. xx. v. 17, Paul calls the elders of the church of Ephesus together ; and v. 28, tells them their duty, take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased

with his own blood. Here, luckily, the word *episcopos* is translated overseer, and not bishop, because it is explained in the text, to import no more, than to feed the church of God, that is to assist them, to preach to them, to exhort them, to advise them, and to give them good examples; but all this implies no jurisdiction, nor had the apostles any to give.

Thessalonians, chap. v. v. 12. And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour amongst you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you. Here Paul, with all humility, entreats the Thessalonians, that they will know, that is take notice of, and hearken to, those who labour for their sakes, who watch over them, and admonish them to mend their lives.

Ephesians, chap. iv, v. 7, 11. Unto every one is given grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ; and he gave some apostles; and some prophets; and some evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; and in the next verse tells for what, namely, for the perfecting the saints, that is, all the faithful) for the work of the ministry, and for the edifying the body of Christ.

Romans, chap. x. v. 14, 15. How then shall they call upon him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they be sent? This relates plainly to the teaching of the apostles, who were sent to preach the gospel to the unconverted world, that otherwise could have known nothing of it, and possibly in a larger sense may be extended to all Christians, who had the power as well as the means to preach it, and consequently might be said to be sent to do it; but I should be glad to know, by what skill in chemistry it has been discovered, or how it came to be guessed, that the clergy of the many nations in Europe, as by law severally established, were the persons meant; or if only one sort of them, which that is; when 'tis plain, that they have no other means of knowing Christ than the laity have, and for the most part can tell them no more than they knew before.

Hebrews, chap. xiii. v. 7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God, whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation; and, v. 17. Obey, by others translated, be persuaded by them that have rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account. Here it seems the editors of our English bible do not think fit to stand to their translations; for in the margent against the words rule over you, in both verses they have inserted the word guides which does not give us altogether so frightful an image.

The word translated obey in the last verse, is explained by the word remember in the first; and the reason given in the one is, because you are to consider the end of their conversation; and in the other is, because they watch for your souls; so that the Hebrews were exhorted to remember, hearken to, or be persuaded by their guides, who had spoke to them the word of God, which was the end of their conversation, and who watched for their souls: And, I think, all good Christians ought to do so still, when they know where to find them, and the clergy have agreed amongst themselves who they are.

At the latter end of the second epistle to Timothy, in our edition of the bible, he is said to be the first bishop of Ephesus, by which we are to understand, if we please, that he was in possession of the authority and dignity of a modern prelate ; but the text says no such matter : Indeed Paul's 1st epistle, chap. i. v. 11, says that the glorious gospel of Christ was committed to his trust, that is, he was entrusted to preach it. And, v. 18, he commits the same charge to Timothy : But in chapter iv. v. 12, 13, he tells him what he is to do ; he is to be an example to the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in faith, in purity ; and till he comes himself, he is to give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine ; and the rest of the epistle is spent in telling him what doctrine he is to preach.

In his second epistle, Paul says unto him, and the things thou hast heard from me amongst many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also ; which he expresses summarily before, in these words, lay hands suddenly on no man ; a ceremony always used amongst the Jews, to denote a person appointed for any purpose, as well as on many other occasions ; so that Paul himself knew, by inspiration, who was fit for his charge, and Timothy was to make good enquiry after faithful men. But there is no power here given but to preach the gospel, and to employ others to do it ; which I have shewn every one was at liberty to do, though all had not an equal call, or were equally qualified for it ; and therefore it was certainly good advice to endeavour to find out such as were, and prevail upon them to undertake it. •

In the epistle to Titus, who it seems was another bishop. he is directed to set in order the things which are wanting, (the business amongst us of church-wardens and vestry-men) and to ordain elders in every city, as Paul had appointed him ; which alludes to private directions before given, and proves nothing, but that Paul took the best precautions and most prudent measures to propagate Christianity, by reducing his converts in every city, into orderly, though voluntary societies, by finding out and appointing discreet and honest men to assist and superintend the rest ; and it cannot be doubted but the people who knew him to be inspired, would be advised by him, accept his recommendations, and consequently hearken to, trust their affairs, and be directed by the wisdom of persons so powerfully recommended ; which respect and deference has been always paid by every sect that ever appeared in the world to their first founders, and for the most part to their after leaders too. •

These are all the texts that I can at present remember, which are usually brought to support the priestly claims, except such as plainly relate to our Saviour himself, or his apostles ; but if any others occur hereafter, I shall take notice of them in proper time.

But what has all this to do with a formal and solemn institution, and established form of government, a political economy, or in ecclesiastical language and style, a spiritual hierarchy ?

What, must sovereign and independent power, (without which, as I have shewn, in my 48th paper, there can be in this case no power at all) depend upon figurative expressions, and allusions to seniority of age, as elders ; to mean and low professions as guides, shepherds, pastors, teachers, overseers, notably translated bishops ? Or upon the

critical knowledge of ancient eastern terms, of doubtful and disputed significations, which would put it in the power of the very few men said to be skilled in the oriental tongues, to settle what establishments or religion they please.

The prophets and evangelists often speak after the manner of the eastern nations, which was for the most part figurative ; where, forever, to the end of the world, and such like language, was frequently used to denote a long space of time ; and therefore general expressions in scripture are not always to be taken strictly, as, covetousness is the root of all evil : swear not at all : children and servants obey your parents and masters in all things : take no care for the morrow : take no thought for your life, what you shall eat, what you shall drink, or what you shall put on : whatever you ask of my father in my name, he shall give it you : submit yourselves to one another : ye younger be subject to the elder ; yea, be subject to one another : and there were many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written, the whole world could not contain the books : and more than an hundred others of the same kind. When such passages occur we must construe them by the rules of eternal righteousness, the reason of the thing, and the general bent of scripture, and then we cannot mistake their meaning, but in such cases as are of no consequence, whether we do or not.

Besides, almost all words vary their meaning by time, and every one of the least reading, knows that there is scarce a word in nature, (except the proper names of persons, places, and things) that is answered by any other in a different language, so as to comprehend exactly the same number of ideas ; nor is it probable that any two persons of the same nation ever used one such word precisely to the same purpose ; but if they were asked to give an adequate definition of what they meant by it, would differ in some particular ; therefore 'tis absurd to suppose that men's duty and eternal salvation should depend upon nice signification of single Hebrew and Greek words ; languages so long since out of common use, and dead.

The Almighty is too merciful to his creatures to leave them at such uncertainties, which is in effect to let them throw cross and pile for their religion : When he makes an establishment, and gives laws to mankind, he always expresses himself in a manner not to be misunderstood ; so he did in the Jewish dispensation, where there was no dispute about the meaning of their law. Though there is nothing in scripture to countenance these pretensions, yet the gospel almost everywhere forbids them, as I have partly shewn in my last paper, and shall unanswerably make out hereafter, when I shall more fully consider the acts and epistles ; and then I will shew that the apostles themselves claimed no authority over other Christians, or any power but that of persuasion. I shall endeavour to shew what is meant by baptism and the Lord's supper ; and do undertake to prove, that the clergy have no more power from scripture to administer them than women and laymen and that nothing is meant by excommunication, but not keeping ill-company. I will shew too, that the clergy in the first ages of Christianity, were always chosen by the people, and lived upon their alms, and by what steps of impiety and forgery the popish priest-hood came to be lords of so great a part of the terrestrial globe. T.

NUMBER 51.

Of the three High-Churches in England.

HAVING in my former papers given some account of the scripture-church; I shall in this, give an account of the three high-churches in England, which are very different from it. And though in order to this, I shall be obliged to take in a good deal of matter, and reveal many high-church and jacobite secrets; yet, I hope to give the publick a clear notion of them, in the compass of one paper. I shall, first, state what the true church of England is; and then describe the three high-churches of England, shewing how they differ from one another and from the true church of England.

I. First, What the true church of England is. All churches by law established, are creatures of that state, where they are so established. For whatever is established, necessarily depends on the legislature, which can and does repeal and enact whatever it thinks fit, and always calls its present constitution in religion, the church by law established. The church of England therefore by law established, is whatever the legislature has enacted, and continues in force, in relation to religion, together with whatever is enjoined by the authority of the king, or is determined by the proper judicatories, acting by the authority of and in subordination to, the legislature. Thus the act of parliament requiring the subscription of the thirty nine articles; the acts of uniformity, and the act of toleration; the king's injunctions, the canons of convocation confirmed by the king; the sentences of the delegates, and the determinations of the house of lords, constitute the church of England; and the members thereof are good and true members, who conform their belief and practice to the several particulars aforesaid: As on the other side, they fall short of being good and true members, who recede from any particular established and settled as aforesaid. Nor can those be truly said to agree with and conform to a church, who do not agree with and conform to it in the sense intended by the makers of the several constitutions of that church. This last is so plain a truth in itself, and so manifestly implied in taking all oaths, and making subscriptions and declarations, that it would have been needless to have observed it, had it not been for the equivocation and Jesuitism of so many of our priests, who think that they may take oaths, and make subscriptions, in senses contrary to, and different from, the intention of the imposers, and yet be good, and true, and perfect members of the church.

II. Now the high-churches, which differ from this establishment, are three in number; which I shall rank under the names of the most remarkable leaders in them. 1. Dr. Bungey's* high-church. 2. Mr. Lesley's high-church. 3. And Dr. Brett's high-church. The two last are in an open separation from one another, as well as from the true church of England. But Dr. Bungey's high-church has as yet

* A name frequently given to the late Dr. Sacheverel.

made no separation from the true church. He and his people are only schismatics in the church, (as were those upon whom St. Paul charges schism, when they were met together in the same church, 1 Cor. xi. v. 18.) being as his present grace of Canterbury* describes some high-church priests, "a new sort of disciplinarians risen up among ourselves, who seem to comply with the government of the church, as others do with that of the state; not out of conscience of their duty, or any love they bear to it, but because they cannot keep their preferments without it: They hate our constitution, and revile all such as stand up in good earnest for it; and yet, for all that, go on to subscribe and rail." Which passage, from so great an authority, cannot be too often quoted.

But to proceed to the description of these three high-churches in their order.

1. Dr. Bungey's high-church stands distinguished from the true church of England; by their Arminian doctrines, contrary to our old orthodox Calvinistical articles; by their enmity to the act of toleration and to the principles on which it is grounded; by their claiming an independent power in the priests to make laws, and govern the church which is contrary to the laws of England, that place the power of making church-laws in other hands, and particularly contrary to the oath of supremacy, which makes his majesty supreme head of the church; by teaching the doctrines of hereditary right and passive obedience, contrary to the judgement and practice of the legislature at and since the revolution, and to the determination of the house of lords, on the impeachment of Dr. Sacheverel, and their condemnation of the Oxford decree; and by a spirit of faction against the present establishment in state, and against his majesty's measures; by rebellion and perjury, by uncharitableness to all foreign, and more especially to domestick protestants; and by an implacable fury and malice towards all dissenters among us, besides Jews and papists: in which they act contrary to the known loyal principles of our church; to its opinion of all foreign protestant churches, which it esteems true churches; to its principles, which all tend to preserve liberty and property; and to its known charitable and peaceable temper, and regard to tender consciences.

2. The second high-church is, Mr. Lesley's high-church. At the revolution several bishops, who were deprived by act of parliament, for not taking the oaths to the government, made an open separation from the church of England; and pretended, that they and their adherents were the church, charging those who filled their sees with being usurpers, and setting up altar against altar; and also charging them and their adherents, together with all the other bishops, clergy and laity, who joined in the same communion with the usurping bishops, with schism. Hereby also they distinguish themselves in principles from the church of England; which, being a legal establishment, asserts to the legislature (which has a right to preserve their peace) a right to deprive bishops for crimes against law. They do not indeed so much distinguish themselves in principles from Dr. Bungey's church, as they do from the true church of England; for the doctor's church

* Dr. William Wake:

equally contends with Mr. Lesley's church against the parliament's right to deprive bishops, and calls it usurpation on the rights of the church; but is for submission to such usurped exercise of power; and contends, schism to be on the side of those, who separate on a principle of defending the rights of the church, against an usurpation of those rights.

This new separate church agrees with Dr. Bungey's church, in the other principles before mentioned, which distinguish the doctor's church from the true church of England. But in point of honesty, or adherence to those principles, it greatly differs from the doctor's church, which goes on to subscribe, and swear, and practise contrary to what they do subscribe and swear; Mr. Lesley's high-church honestly practising in several respects according to its villainous principles.

Proceed we now to Dr. Brett's high-church. Soon after king George's accession to the crown, the bishops of the last mentioned high-church did all, except one, assemble in a synod, where they resolved upon making four alterations in the common prayer book: 1. To mix water with the wine in the sacrament. 2. A prayer for the dead. 3. A prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost, upon the bread and wine in the sacrament. 4. An oblatory prayer; which goes upon the ground, that the eucharist is a proper sacrifice. All which Dr. Brett is not only an advocate for, as an author, but (perhaps) as titular archbishop of Canterbury, exercised his authority in enjoining. This has split the last high-church into two churches; Dr. Brett and his followers adhering to the bishops, or church governors of the church, in behalf of wine and water, &c. and Mr. Lesley and his followers adhering to one bishop only, in behalf of wine, &c. contrary to the determination of their own bishops, and all their own principles about the authority of bishops and clergy.

To render my account of our several high-churches of England more complete; I shall, by way of supplement, observe, that there is a distinction in Dr. Bungey's church; and his high-church may be divided into two high-churches. Some of his high-church are swearers to the government, and say the church prayers for his majesty king George and his family, continuing at the same time disaffected to him, and enemies to his legal title. Others of the doctor's high-church are non-swearers; and, though they come to the church, disown joining with the swearers in the prayers for the king and his family; which practice of theirs the profound Mr. Dodwel has defended in a book, (whose title I shall, upon memory, venture to give the reader) entitled a further prospect of the case in view; proving, that it is our duty to be present at sinful prayers, made sinful by mistake of fallible superiours, who have a right of imposing prayers. So that, I think, the high-churches of England may not improperly be reckoned four in number; which may be justly distinguished by things, as well as by names of men after the following manner.

- I. The swearing and for-swearing high-church.
- II. The non-swearing high-church, that contends for being present at the sinful prayers of the church.
- III. The non-swearing wine and water church.
- IV. The non-swearing no water church.

NUMBER 52.

An Analogy between ancient Heathenism and modern Priccraft.

As extremes meet in a point, and corruption in terrestrial bodies is the next state from perfection ; so all the commands and denunciations of heaven have not been able to keep the Christian priesthood, in most countries, from running headlong into the superstitions and follies of the Gentile idolaters. By a strange sort of fatality, they have jumped in the same thoughts, and played over and over again, the same tricks ; insomuch, that if we but make small allowances for the constant alterations of time, and such as must necessarily result from different languages and fashions, the present Romish churches might be easily mistaken for heathen temples, and the services performed in them for pagan worship.

The devil, as subtle and cunning as he is represented to be, with all the assistance of corrupt priests, has not been able to find out a new device, but has ever danced the hay, and made his rounds within the same circle. The same arts and stratagems have been always made use of to seduce and delude mankind ; the same advantages taken of their weakness and passions, and in all times equally applied to destroy true religion, advance the priest-hood, and make the honest and industrious, but unthinking, part of the world, the prey and property of hypocrites and impostors.

The all-powerful, all-wise, and all-merciful God himself, is too often represented like the Heathen deities, to be revengeful, cruel, capricious, impotent, vain, fond of commendation, and flattery ; and, in effect, subject to all the other passions and imperfections of the weakest men : His being, which is boundless as extension, and which the whole world cannot contain, is pretended to be confined to single structures, and narrow edifices built with hands ; nay, to parts of those edifices ; where he is supposed to be pleased and gratified, like frail mortals, with costly furniture, gilded roofs, engraven and polished marble, fine carving, and other curious, though baubling workmanship of mechanicks and artificers.

I confess I am not wise enough to find out any essential difference between the present and the old Roman worship ; they both dedicate their temples to dead men and women, whom the papists call saints, and the pagans called demi-gods and goddesses : the pagan forms of hocus pocus, which they called consecrations, were intended to conjure and call down their deities to inhabit personally their temples, their images and idols : The popish priests consecrate their churches for the same purpose, namely, to obtain the more immediate presence of the deity : like the old Romans too, they erect altars in their temples, where they worship saints with supplications, tears, grimaces, antick and distorted faces and gestures, musick, and ceremonies, and tender offerings and oblations to them ; and, like the others, often make processions, cavalcades, and shews in their honour ; and sometimes go in pilgrimages to them, to obtain their favour.

The popish priests have prophaned the plain and simple direction of our Saviour to his disciples, for commemorating the benefits which we have received by his death, by turning it into an old Roman sacrifice : Amongst them, the pipes and harpers were the fore-runners of the shew ; and before the modern sacrifice, the organs strike up a tune : There the priests went up to the altar in a white garment free from spots, (being an emblem of innocence ;) in new Rome, the priest wears a white surplice : The heathen priest turned about to the east, being the region of the rising sun, and bowed ; the popish priest does the same : The horns of the beasts sacrificed were marked with gold, and his blood received in golden and silver vessels ; here the pretended Christian sacrifice of the real body and blood of Christ, is poured into the same costly cups, or laid upon as rich plates and dishes : The old Roman altar was raised, by several steps, above the floor of their temples ; so is the present. The priest, amongst them, made a crooked line with his knife from the head to the tail of the victim ; the popish priest plays tricks of legerdemain with his fingers over the elements : lastly, when the beast was consecrated and killed, the heathen priests regaled themselves upon what was left, after their gods were served ; the Romish priests make it prophane for any layman to drink of the consecrated wine, or for any one even to eat the bread but the communicants.

The old Romans had different orders of priests, with different and distinct offices and revenues ; the high-priest, the luperci, the augurs, the haruspices, the pontifices, the flamines, salii, feciales, the duumviri, decemviri, quindecimviri, the keepers of the sybilline books, the corybantes, &c. The present Romans (besides the several sorts which are in use and fashion amongst us) have a pope, cardinals, dominicans, franciscans, jesuits, carmelites, benedictines, carthusians, capuchins, cistercians, observantines, augustines, servites, &c. In imitation also of the vestal virgins, in old Rome, they have founded several orders of nuns, who take a vow of chastity, for the breach of which they are immured, as the others were buried alive : and as they had a right to deliver from the hands of justice, any malefactors whom they casually met in their walks ; so the present Romish priests claim and exercise an equal right to protect all criminals who can fly to them for protection, which is borrowed from that of the old Roman asylums.

The old Romans, had their dies fastos and nefastos, their fasts and feasts, their sacrificia, their epula's, their feria's, in honour of their gods and demi-gods ; the present Romans also make distinctions of days a great part of their religion ; they too have their dies fastos and nefastos, their stated fasts and feasts in honour of their saints, or to commemorate and condole past misfortunes, or rejoice over signal successes ; and some of their feasts, and particularly their carnivals, exceed in lewdness and prodigality the bacchanalia of the antients.

The heathens had their deos tutelares, to whom the defence of certain countries were committed ; and their deos præsides, who had the safe-guard of particular cities : The papists have saints, who supply the same offices. Artificers and professions have also their particular saints who preside over them ; scholars have their saint Nicholas, and saint Gregory ; painters, saint Luke ; as soldiers and lovers had formerly their Mars, and Venus : Diseases too have their saints to cure

them; as the pain, saint Roque; the falling-evil, saint Cornelius; the tooth-ache, saint Appollin; and even beasts and cattle have their's; saint Loy is the horse-leech, and saint Anthony the swine-herd.

As the Heathen priests would suffer none to come into their sanctuaries but themselves; neither will the Popish priests permit any layman to come within the rails of the altar, and prophane with unhallowed feet that holy place. As the ancients obliged all who were initiated into their mysteries to confess, under the most severe denunciations, all the secrets of their past lives, by which means they were so much in their power, that they never afterwards durst blab out what they saw, nor give the least opposition to their designs; so the Romish priests trust their mysteries only to the vere adepti, (their trusty associates) and have made the same use of confession, (the loss of which is sorely lamented by others :) for they oblige, upon the penalty of damnation, all their votaries to confess not only their private sins, but secret thoughts, as well as every thing else they know of other peoples, which may in any way regard the interests of their order; and so have possession and fast hold of all families, and become acquainted with all the designs, which may ever thwart their pride; and consequently have secured their own domination, and the people's misery, beyond almost a possibility of redress.

Lastly, as the Heathen priests sacrificed goats to Bacchus, for browsing his vines; and men to Pluto and Proserpine, and other angry deities, to appease their wrath, and avert evils from themselves; so the Popish priests sacrifice and devote their enemies, under the names of hereticks and schismatics, to the infernal fiend: And as those idolaters were allowed to know when was the most proper time to make their sacrifices to their deities, and what victims would be most acceptable to them, as being presumed to understand best the minds of their provoked gods; so the present ones are in possession of the sole judgement of what is heresy, and of sacrificing by that means whom they please to their ambition and revenge; which equally subjects the unhappy laity to them.

They have also imitated the Heathens in making every human foible and imbecility, as well as every common and uncommon appearance in nature, contribute to their interests; which shall be the subject of my next paper.

T.

NUMBER 53.

Priestly Empire founded on the Weakness of Human Nature.

THERE is not a living creature in the universe, which has not some innate weakness, or original imbecility co-eval with its being; that is, some inclinations or disgusts, some peculiar desires or fears, which render it an easy prey to other animals, who, from their constitutional sagacity or experience, know how to take advantage of this infirmity; of

which it would be needless, as well as endless, to enumerate particulars. My purpose is only to shew, that all the dignity of human nature, and the superiority which Almighty God has given to man above other beings, has not exempted him from this imperfection; which probably was left in his fabrick, to put him in mind of his mortality, to humble his pride, and excite his diligence.

The peculiar foible of mankind, is superstition, or an intrinsick and pannick fear of beings invisible and unknown. It is obvious to every one, that there must be causes in nature for all the good or evil which does, or ever can happen to us; and it is impossible for any man so far to divest himself of all concern for his own happiness, as not to be solicitous to know what those causes are: and since, for the most part, they are so hidden and out of sight, that we cannot perceive or discover them by our own endeavours, we conclude them to be immaterial, and in their own nature invisible; and are, for the most part, ready to take their accounts, who have the dexterity to make us believe that they know more of the matter than we do, and that they will not deceive us.

To this ignorance and credulity joined together, we are beholden for the most grievous frauds and impositions, which ever did, or do yet oppress mankind, and interrupt their happiness; namely, for the revelations and visions of enthusiasts, for all the forged religions in the world, and the abuses and corruptions of the true one; as well as all the idle and fantastical stories of conjurers and witches, of spirits, apparitions, fairies, dæmons and hobgoblins, fortune-tellers, astrologers and the belief in dreams, portents, omens, prognosticks, and the several sorts of divinations; all which, more or less, disturb the greatest part of the world, and have made them the dupes and property of knaves and imposters in all ages.

Every thing in the universe is in constant motion, and wherever we move we are surrounded with bodies, every one of which must, in a certain degree, operate upon themselves and us; and it cannot be otherwise, that in the variety of actions and events, which happen in all nature, but some must appear very extraordinary to those who know not their true causes. Men naturally admire what they cannot apprehend, and seem to do some sort of credit to their understandings, in believing whatever is out of their reach, to be supernatural.

From hence perpetual advantages have been given to, and occasions taken by the heathen and popish priests, to circumvent and oppress the credulous and unwary vulgar. What fraudulent uses have been made of eclipses, meteors, epidemical plagues, inundations, great thunder and lightnings, and other amazing prodigies, and seeming menaces of nature? What juggling tricks have been or may be acted with glasses, speaking-trumpets, ventriloquies, echoes, phosphorus, magick-lanterns, &c. in the ignorant parts of the world? The Americans were taught to believe, that paper and letters, were spirits, which conveyed men's thoughts from one to another; and a dancing mare was, not many years since, burnt for a witch in the inquisition in Portugal.

Nature works by a thousand ways imperceptible to us; the loadstone draws iron to it, gold, quick-silver; the sensitive plant shrinks from the touch; some sorts of vegetables attract one another and twine together; others grow farther apart; the treading upon the torp-

do affects, and gives raging pains to our whole bodies; turkey cocks and pheasants fly at a red rag; a rattle-snake, by a sort of magical power in his eyes (as it is said) will force a squirrel to run into his mouth; musick will cure the bite of a Tarantula; the frights and longings of women with child, will stamp impressions upon the babes within them; people, in their sleep, will walk securely over precipices, and the ridges of houses, where they durst not venture, when awake; lightning will melt a sword without hurting the scabbard.

There is something within us, which we all feel, that baffles and gets the better of our best reasonings and philosophy; and this shews itself in love, in fear, in hatred, ambition, and almost every act of the mind; but in nothing so much as in superstition: sometimes we find a secret panic, and at other times a strange and uncommon energy, or feeling of a mighty power within us; and not being able to account by any conduct of reason, or other causes in nature, for such perceptions, we are easily persuaded to believe them to be supernatural. Hence great philosophers, poets, legislators, famous conquerors, and often madmen, have been thought in many ages, by themselves as well as others, to have been inspired; and even distempers, such as, apoplexies, epilepsies, prophetick fits and trances, have been deemed miraculous.

Nothing strikes so strongly upon our senses, as what causes surprize and admiration; there are very few men, who are not affected with unusual sounds and voices, with the groans of others in misery, the solemnity of a coronation, or any publick shew, the pomp of a funeral, the face of a procession, the power of eloquence, the charms of poetry, the rich and splendid equipage of great men, or the solemn pliz and men of an enthusiast. Whoever therefore can find out the secret of hitting luckily upon this foible and native imbecility in mankind, may govern them and lead them as he pleases. And herein has consisted the greatest skill and success of crafty priests in all ages. They have made use of this power to turn us and wind us to all their purposes, and have built and found-d most of their superstitions upon it; and consequently have ever adapted their worship rather to catch our passions, than convince our minds, and enlighten our understandings; all which is directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity and the precepts of our Saviour, as shall be fully shewn in the next paper.

For this reason the heathens built their temples in groves, in solitary, dark and desert recesses, by or over caverns, and grottoes, or in the midst of echoing and resounding rocks, that the hideous and dismal aspect, and often hollow and hoarse bellowing of such places, might strike a solemn awe and religious horroir into their votaries, and sometimes help their imaginations to hear voices, and see forms, and so intimidate and prepare them for any stories and impressions, which they should think it their interest to make.

The popish priests have admirably well aped these their predecessors; by building their churches dark and dismal, with figured and painted windows, to let in a false and glimmering light; arched and contrived in such manner, as to resound the voice hollow and shrill; with many private apartments, canopies for their saints, proud inscriptions, whispering places, secret chappels for confessions, saying masses, dirges, penances, &c. Like the heathens too, they build

their temples solemn and magnificent, in antick and uncommon figures, adorn them with silver and gold, rich carpets, curious statues, and images stuck about with jewels; and their priests appear in gaudy vestments, and fantastical robes and caps, and perform their worship with musick and affected ceremonies; all which pageantry and farce is calculated, and intended to act upon the passions, attract the eyes, amuse, lull, and suspend the understanding, and draw admiration and reverence to those who preside in these haughty fabricks, and this pompous adoration. Their bells too, which call the people together, are contrived to emit such sounds, as affect the minds of most people, with a sort of superstitious melancholy.

Indeed, as the Romish priests are more numerous, have vastly larger revenues, and more leisure, so they have greatly improved upon the heathens in this art of deceiving; insomuch, that there is scarce an imperfection or error of human nature, which is not adopted into their scheme, and made subservient to their interest. Men of sprightly genius and courage are caught by their ambition, are highly honoured, flattered and raised up by their general voice to the highest dignities, and then are indulged in all their passions, and gratified with confessors, who are not only to overlook or pardon, but assist them in their vicious pleasures; by which arts those great talents, instead of being nobly employed to free mankind from sacerdotal usurpations, are meanly perverted to support and aggrandize the monkish empire.

Men of violent and impetuous tempers, are suitably employed to execute their tyrannical designs, and to take vengeance of their enemies; and the debauched and wicked are made to buy their peace of heaven, by giving money and lands to the priests; but none contribute so much to advance their system, as visionaries and enthusiasts: There are in all countries, multitudes of people, whom ignorance, pride, conceit, ill habit of body, melancholy and splenetick tempers, unfortunate circumstances, causeless and secret fears, and a pannick disposition of mind, have prepared to be the objects, as well as instruments of delusion, and they have been ever made use of accordingly.

Some of these are thrust or decoyed into religious houses, or persuaded to lead retired, recluse and austere lives, and to torture and punish themselves with whippings, penances, fasting, and to walk bare-foot in order to astonish the gaping multitude, and thereby gain reverence to the priesthood, for their fancied holiness; whilst the governing ecclesiasticks feast and riot in delicious banquets, ride in state with coaches and six, attended by numerous servants in costly liveries, and earth and sea is ransacked, and heaven itself profaned, to maintain their luxury and pride.

Such amongst them as are disposed to hear voices and see forms, shall hear and see enough of those, which are real ones, and afterwards be made use of to divulge them; and in order to it, their sanctity shall be proclaimed abroad, and their mad and incoherent speeches be called revelations, heavenly dispensations, and incomprehensible mysteries. Such crazed and fanatical men and women have been the founders of most of the colleges, monasteries, and nunneries of the Romish church, (to say nothing of others) and their follies and madness been the support of the papal dominion.

But this artificial devotion, this mechanick religion has nothing to do with Christianity ; which is natural religion restored and improved, and consists in virtue and morality, and in being useful and beneficent to one another, as I shall shew in my next paper.

The prophets have taught us the same lesson ; the first chapter of Isaiah fully shews, that religion does not consist in sacrifices, in burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts, in the blood of bullocks, and of lambs, and of he-goats, in vain oblations, incense, new-moons, sabbaths, and calling of assemblies, in appointed feasts, or many prayers ; but in doing good to mankind. The prophet sums up our duty in these words, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgement, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow ; for, as another prophet says, what doth the Lord require of thee, O man, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? *Micah*, chap. vi. v. 8. T.

NUMBER 54.

In what only true Religion consists.

I HAVE undertaken in this paper to prove, what, methinks, should want no proof ; namely, that the all-powerful God is not a whimsical and humourous being, that governs his creatures by caprice, and loads them with arbitrary and useless burthens, which can serve no good purpose in nature.

The Almighty is infinitely happy in his own perfections, and cannot receive pleasure from such things or actions, as only the weakest men are fond of, and the wisest condemn. He is not capable, like mortals, of being ruffled by accidents, or surprized by disappointments. Wisdom, goodness and felicity, are essential to his being ; and consequently, he could have no view in creating mankind, but their own happiness ; for we can neither add to his, nor take away from it.

It is absurd therefore to suppose, that there can be any merit in bare opinions and abstruse speculations ; or, in the performance of indifferent and useless actions ; or, indeed, that any thing can be part of true religion, but what has a tendency to make men virtuous and happy. The father of mercies will never perplex our minds, or burthen our bodies, with any thing that signifies nothing.

Moses indeed gave to the Jews a carnal law, a law of bondage ; a yoke, which neither they, nor their posterity could bear ; statutes which were not good, and judgments by which they could not live.— But these were given them for the hardness of their hearts, and as punishments for their manifold sins and iniquities. And besides, they were only to last for a time, and afterwards give way to a simple, pure, and perfect law, to a spiritual, innocent, and undeliled religion ; free from their own fond superstitions, and the stale idolatries of the Gentiles ; not loaded either with priests, sacrifices, or ceremonies ; a reli-

gion, which was to consist in spirit and in truth, and intended to make men wiser and better.

It seems plain to me, that there is but one article of faith in all this religion, and that essential to the very being of it; namely, that Jesus is the Messiah: Without this preliminary acknowledgment, his mission could not have been owned, nor his precepts obeyed; which are nothing else but exhortations to love, and directions for social happiness; and which he has enforced, by annexing eternal rewards to the observance of them. Hitherto virtue had expected its reward in this life; but our Saviour gave new sanctions to it, by bringing life and immortality to light.

There is no proposition in all Scripture more evidently revealed, or laid down in more positive and express terms, than that the confession of this truth, was the basis and support of Christianity, the great thing requisite to be believed: Every thing else is practical duty, and belief is no farther concerned in it, than as it produces practice. For before we can think ourselves obliged by a precept, we must be satisfied of its reasonableness, or of the legislator's authority.

The world has been so long corrupted by superstition, and deluded and abused by selfish and lying priests, who taught wickedness for virtue, and nonsense for philosophy, and placed devotion in foolish ceremonies and sacrifices, and in ridiculous cringes, antick vestments and grimaces, that nothing less than a divine legislator, with the power of miracles, could restore men to their senses and to natural religion.—The sole article therefore that our Saviour made necessary to be believed, was, that he came from God, and acted by the authority of God. Then every one would see the impossibility that he could deceive or mislead men, and consequently would take his word for every thing else, in the sense which he understood it.

And this proceeding was agreeable to eternal reason; namely, to make nothing necessary in belief, which was not necessary to practice: for what purpose could be served in obliging men to believe, or rather to say that they believed mysterious and unintelligible propositions? Such articles are only the watch-words of a party, and can never be the objects of real assent; for no man can be said to believe what he does not understand, and has not suitable ideas of, as far as his belief goes. We must understand the meaning of every term in a proposition, before we can assent to it or dissent from it: for words, of which we do not understand the signification, are the same to us as if they had no signification at all. How much therefore more honest and prudent would it be to own, at first, our ignorance concerning certain abstruse speculations, than to form propositions about them, pretend to define and explain them, and then confess that we do not understand our own definitions and explanations; and call out heresy and atheism, when we are desired to speak intelligibly, and tell what we mean?

But to the proofs from Scripture: John 3, 6, says, he that believeth in him is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already. And v. 36, he that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not on the Son, shall not see life. And chap. 6, 40, every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may live eternally. And v. 51, I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this, he shall live for ever. And Acts x. 43,

to him all the prophets bear witness, that through his name, whoever shall believe in him, shall receive remission of sins. And chap. xvi. v. 31, and they said, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And Rom. chap. x. v. 9, if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 1st. Epistle of John, chap. iv. ver. 2, 3, and 15, and chap. v. ver. 1, to the same purpose.

These, with many more plain and direct texts, make only this article necessary to be believed, and supersede all others. Nor is this required of us, barely because it is true, or to gain adventitious honour to the Deity, who wants not the applause of poor mortal men; for such belief could signify nothing: But it was required of us to obtain obedience to his commands, and direct our practice, to promote virtuous actions, and the principles which produce them. John, chap. v. ver. 24, verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life. And chap. viii. v. 31, Jesus said to those Jews which believed on him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples, indeed. So that faith in Christ is not enough, unless we obey his word; or rather, we cannot be truly said to believe in him, whilst we reject his commandments. First Epistle general of St. John, chap. ii. ver. 3, 4, and hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments: He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

Let us therefore see what are those commands, in the observance of which Christianity consists. It does not consist in the observance of days, nor months, nor time, nor years, Gal. iv. and 9. And Rom. xiv. v. 5. One man esteemeth one day above another, another man esteemeth every day alike: let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.

It does not consist in positive institutions, in forms and ceremonies. 1 Cor. chap. vii. v. 19. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of Christ. And Gal. vi. v. 15. In Christ Jesus, neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. Gal. v. ver. 6. to the same purpose.

It does not consist in meats nor in drinks, in fish nor in flesh. 1 Cor. chap. viii. v. 8 meat commendeth us not to God; for neither if we eat, are we the better; nor if we eat not, are we the worse. But take heed lest this liberty of yours become a stumbling-block to them that are weak. And Rom. xiv. v. 17, the kingdom of God is not meat nor drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

It consists not in long prayers, nor in many prayers. Matth. vi. v. 7. when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathens do; for they think they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like them; for the Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask. Indeed, it seems plain to me from this text, as well as from the reason of the thing, that prayer itself becomes chiefly a duty, as it raises our minds, by a contemplation of the divine wisdom, power and goodness, to an acknowledgment of his repeated bounties to

mankind ; and as it disposes us to an imitation of those high perfections, and to be merciful and beneficent to one another. For it is absurd to suppose, that we can direct the All-wise Being in the dispensations of his providence ; or can flatter or persuade him out of his eternal decrees. If therefore any texts in scripture seem to carry a contrary implication, I conceive that they ought to be understood with the same allowances as those are, which speak of God's hands and feet, and of his being subject to human passions.

It does not consist in sacrifices performed in pompous churches and magnificent buildings, or in consecrated trinkets. Acts xvii. v. 24, 25, God, that made the world, and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands, neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he wanted any thing, seeing he giveth to all life and breath, and every thing. Acts vii. v. 49, 50, The most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands. Heaven is his throne, and earth is his footstool ; what house will ye build to me, saith the Lord ; or where is the place of my rest ? Hath not my hand made all things ?

His being is universal, not confined to churches, chappels, choirs, nor altars ; but his presence is every where alike, and not more immediately in one place than another. Acts xvii. v. 27, 28, 29, He is not far from every one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being, as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are his off-spring ; for as much therefore, as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold or silver, or stone graven by art or man's device.

The Almighty has no favourite opinions, sects and nations. Acts x. v. 34, 35, And Peter opened his mouth and said, of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him. Rom. ii. v. 11, There is no respect of persons with God. Colos. iii. v. 11, There is neither Greek, nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free, but Christ is all, and in all. Gal. iii. v. 28, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Jesus Christ.

How therefore shall we worship him ? how know his will ? St. John tells us, chap. vii. v. 16, 17, If any man will do God's will, he will know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or not ; that is as much as to say, " Make use of the judgement which God has given you ; and see whether the doctrine taught you, be worthy of an omnipotent author ; see whether it teach peace and love to your neighbour, compassion to all in distress, forbearance of injuries, humanity and indulgence to all who differ from you, duty to parents, submission and obedience to the laws of your country, and charitableness and benevolence to all mankind, and even to the brute creation ; then you may be sure such doctrine comes from God. But if it breathe forth revenge, and implacable hatred ; if it raise mobs, civil wars, and persecutions, for trifling opinions ; if it have for its end ambition and worldly pride, and overturn every thing sacred and civil, which stands in its way : if it encourage the worst men, and oppress the best ;

ourage industry, and depopulate nations ; then there are
 es of Satan's, or the popish priest's foot in it, and such a
 an never come from God."

you have made this your best use of the faculties which God
 you, your endeavours will certainly be accepted by him ;
 will meet all the reward which attends the judging right, since
 done all in your power to do so : for God puts upon no man
 stian task of making bricks without straw ; nor requires any
 ch you cannot perform. Rom. chap. ii, v. 10, 11, glory,
 nd peace, to every man who worketh good ; to the Jew first,
 to the gentile : for as many as have sinned without law,
 unished without law ; and those that have sinned in the law,
 sh by the law. And v. 14, 15, for when the gentiles, which
 the law, do by nature the things of the law, they are a law
 selves : which sheweth the work of the law written in their
 heir conscience also bearing them witness, and their thoughts
 while accusing or else excusing one another.

the gentiles themselves are to be judged by their sincerity,
 ondemned for involuntary errors. Rom. xix, v. 10, 11, 12,
 dost thou judge thy brother ? As I live, saith the Lord, every
 I bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God ; so then
 of us shall give an account to God. Let us not, therefore,
 another any more. And, v. 22, we are told who will be
 happiness ; happy is he who condemneth not himself in that
 ch he alloweth. First epistle general of St. John, chap. iii,
 loved, if our hearts condemn us not, then have we confidence
 God.

ius, though a heathen, is commended in acts the xth, v. 2, as a
 an, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave
 us to the people, and prayed to God always ; and Lydia, a
 purple, though neither a Jew nor a Christian, is said to be a
 er of God, and one whose heart God hath opened, before she
 preaching of Paul, acts xvi, v. 14.

omprehensive charity, this spirit of publick beneficence, runs
 ere through the new testament ; nor can I find any precept
 en, but what is manifestly advantageous to mankind, condu-
 eir present happiness, and deducible from eternal reason, and
 of it. Matth. xxii, v. 35, to 39, a lawyer asked of our Sa-
 ich is the great commandment of the law ? And Jesus said un-
 ou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with
 ul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great com-
 it : And the second is like unto it ; thou shalt love thy neigh-
 byself : Upon these two commandments hang all the law and
 ets.

er lawyer asks of him, (Luke x. 25,) what shall I do to obtain
 ife ? and he said unto him, what is written in the law ? how
 ou ? And he said thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all
 and all thy strength, and all thy mind, and thy neighbour as
 And he said unto him, thou hast answered right : Do this,
 shalt live. And chap. xviii, v. 18, and 20, &c. A certain
 ed him, saying, good master, what shall I do to inherit eternal
 d Jesus said, thou knowest the commandments : do not com-

mit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness ? honour thy father and thy mother. He indeed adds afterwards another condition, which was to sell all he had, and give it too the poor ; which the ruler could not bring himself to comply with : though I dare say he would have promised to have believed creeds by the dozen, if those would have done him any service. But I cannot find, that in all scripture, our Saviour does impose upon us the belief of one modern creed, or of any other but that he was the Messiah.

Chap. xviii, v. 8, Zaccheus, a publican, saith unto the Lord, half of my goods I gave unto the poor ; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four fold : And Jesus said unto him, this day is salvation come unto thy house ; without asking him one question about his faith.

Rom. xiii, v. 8, 9, owe no man any thing, but to love one another ; for he that loveth another, hath fulfilled the law : For this, thou shalt not commit adultery, thou shalt not kill, thou shalt not steal, thou shalt not bear false witness, thou shalt not covet ; and if there is any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The same doctrine, in another place, is thus shortly described ; by this all men shall know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another. So that the love of God, and of our neighbour, is the whole duty of a Christian. The first implies the worship of God, or rather is the true and very worship of God in spirit and in truth ; and the latter comprehends all the moral and social virtues. 1st epistle of John, chap. iv, v. 7, 8. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God ; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God ; he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love. v. 16. God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. And, chap. v, ver. 3. St. John defines what the love of God is ; namely, for this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.

This appears still more evident, when we examine, for what virtues and crimes men will be rewarded, and punished, eternally. Matth. chap. xxv, v. 31, when the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations ; and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats ; and he shall set the sheep on the right hand, and the goats on the left. Then shall the king say to them on the right hand, come, ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world : for I was hungry, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall he say also to them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels ; for I was hungred, and ye gave me no meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in ; naked, and ye clothed me not ; sick and in prison, and ye visited me not.

But the want of faith is here objected to no man : No one is rewarded, or punished, for believing, or not believing, in transubstantiation, consubstantiation, or the real presence ; in predestination or free-will ;

·having, or not having, right or wrong conceptions of the trinity
ity, the incarnation, hypostatic union, infinite satisfaction, &c.
is the divine right of bishops, presbyters, and tithes, once men-
d. Not a word about obedience to spiritual sovereigns, and ec-
clesiastical princes, or about our receiving the sacraments from a regu-
lar priest, descended in a right line from the apostles.

Such a religion as this, which I have described, is agreeable to the
equity and justice ; which does not punish any man for speculative opinions,
specially for opinions, which neither do good nor hurt to any one,
or opinions which no one can help.

This is a religion every way worthy of its eternal author ; and we
know by the doctrine, that it comes from God. It is a religion
plain and sensible, for philosophers, for honest men ; and comprehensi-
ble by the meanest vulgar, without a guide ; a religion of reason,
free from the blind mazes and studied intricacies of popish priests, and
friendly to society at first view. It despises apostish gestures, and ex-
traneous buffoonery ; and effectually prevents, and puts an end to, all in-
fidelity, fierceness, and holy squabbles, ever occasioned by the selfish
ambitions of corrupt priests. It leaves not unhappy men in perpetual
fears and anxieties, nor tosses and tumbles them, for relief, out of one
superstition into another ; but esteems them all alike.

And short this is a religion, which every wise and honest man would
acknowledge to be religion ; a religion of charity, the religion of Jesus ; and
this is the Independent Whig's religion.

T. & G.

THE CRAFTSMEN.



A Sermon or Paraphrase upon several verses in the 19th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

I SHALL not this day, my beloved, as the usual manner is, account you with the scraps of a verse, or only with a whole verse, out of any part of the gospel ; which method is often made use of in such places as this, purely to avoid telling what goes before or comes after ; but shall choose for my text the greatest part of the 19th chapter of the Acts : And in discoursing upon this portion of scripture, so fruitful in good instructions and examples, I shall confine myself to the following method.

I. First, I shall make some general observations upon the behaviour of the apostle Paul in his ministry.

II. Secondly, I shall discourse more particularly upon several verses in this chapter : And,

III. Thirdly, and lastly, I shall draw from the whole, some useful and seasonable inferences, and then conclude.

I. I shall make some general observations upon the apostle Paul ; and 1st, of all, my brethren, it is note-worthy, that Paul made the greatest change that ever man did, even from a persecutor to an apostle ; two characters as opposite as is that of Lucifer to an angel of light. As soon as light from the Lord fell upon him, he no longer breathes threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, as he had in fore-time, nor puts in execution the orders he had about him from the high-priest, or arch-bishop of the Jews, to bring the first Christians and dissenters of those days, bound to Jerusalem. On the contrary, though he was just before an hard-hearted persecutor for the Church by law established, on a sudden, he becomes a lover of the saints ; and now, behold he prayeth ! Acts ix. 11.

1st, Let us learn from hence, dearly beloved, as we go along ; namely, that as soon as the fear of the Lord entereth into a man's heart, the sword of persecution droppeth out of his hand. Peace, which is the badge of the gospel ; and cruelty which is the coat of arms of satan, cannot dwell together. Behold he prayeth !

2dly, It is observable, that when a zealot leaves his party, and turns Christian, how very apt the high party are, ungratefully to forget all his former wicked merit, which made him dear to them ; and to persecute him for apostatizing into mercy and grace. While Paul continued the fiery flail of the godly, the priests held him in high favour, and trusted him with their ecclesiastical commission : And for what ? Why, to bring bound to Jerusalem all those of this way : Of what

way? Why all that forsook the established synagogue and followed Christ.

3dly, Observe my bretheren, that conscience and non-conformity had the powers of the world against them seventeen hundred years ago. Paul, the blasphemer, had a post; but Paul the convert, Paul the saint, is allowed no toleration; yea, they watched the gates day and night to kill him: for, behold he prayeth!

4thly, It is observable from the whole history of Paul, that the grace of God makes a man both meek under sufferings, and bold for Christ. Here our convert neither returns the injury, nor slacks his pace in planting the gospel; both hard tasks! He risked his life and laboured in the vineyard without pay; a rare thing in our day! when the first motive for overseeing souls, is so much a year. The apostle drove no bargain about preaching, nor made a market of salvation.

Oh! my beloved, how many dignified drones have we in our time, who set up for a likeness to the apostles, without any likeness; who take great sums for mock apostleship, when nothing thrives by their ministry, but their bellies! This, my friends, is lamentable, but it is lamentably true.

II. I haste now to my second general head, and will discourse particularly upon several verses in this chapter.

I begin with verse the 8th, And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

1st. And he went into the synagogue. Observe we here, 1st, my beloved brethren that as great bigots as the Jews were, and as great a dissenter as Paul was, yet they suffered him to preach in their synagogues, or churches. He had a clear stage, though perhaps not equal favour. Now think ye, my friends, if the same apostle should come among us here in London, at this time, that he would be permitted to preach in his own church, unless he first qualified himself according to the forms and ceremonies of the church of England by law established? Or would he, trow ye, get any preferment that the black dons could hinder him from, in case he persisted to preach what his master preached before him, namely, that Christ's kingdom was not of this world?

2dly, My beloved, we may see here, the great point of Paul's preaching; he disputed and persuaded the things concerning the kingdom of God. Not a word of his own spiritual dominion, not a word of episcopal sovereigns, who were to descend, as it were, from his loins, and who, without his inspiration or miracles, were to succeed him in what he never had; worldly wealth, worldly grandeur, and worldly power; things which always marr the kingdom of God, instead of promoting it; there being no fellowship between Christ and Belial.

Let us now proceed to the 9th verse, and see what that says; but when divers were hardened, (observe he says, when divers were hardened) and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

The priests, no doubt, who traded in ceremonies, and knew nothing of Jesus Christ, or of inward holiness, were nettled at a new religion which taught men a plain path to heaven, without the incumbrances of

sacrifices, or priests, or fopperies ; a religion, that had a professed enmity to all secular gain and all holy trifling.

Marvel not at it, my brethren, a religion without a hierarchy, and godliness without gain, will never please any set of high-priests : Nothing will go down with them but pride and grimace, and the ready penny. Poor Paul had nothing about him of all this, nor did he teach a religion that had. All that he brought, was a Christ crucified, and salvation in and through him. They therefore spake evil of that way before the multitude ; that is, the priests told the people that Paul was an heretick, and his doctrine was schism : but for themselves, they had antiquity and the fathers on their side, with an orthodox church full of decent types and ceremonies.

There needed no more to prevent the Apostle from doing any good among them : So he departed from them. This was all the punishment he inflicted on them, and this was enough. He who had the Holy Ghost, could have inflicted death or misery on them ; but it was opposite to the genius of his religion, which allows spiritual pastors to feed their flocks, but not force them, nor to punish them if they refuse to feed. If a man has not a mind to be saved, he has the worst of it himself ; and what is it to the priests ? as master Selden well remarketh.

This, my brethren, was the primitive ex-communication. If you could work no good upon a man ; or if that man worked mischief to you, or gave you scandal ; why you would not keep company with him. But to give him to the devil, because he was already going to the devil of himself, is to be a minister of Christ the backward way.— Besides, there was no need of it. The Apostle, in my text, neither curses these unbelieving high-churchmen, who hardened themselves against him, nor censures them, nor fines them ; all which he who had the power of miracles could have done, had he liked it. He barely departed from them. And if he did not damn them for the sake of their souls, so neither did he surrender them to beelzebub for the sake of their money. He demanded not a grey groat of them ; so far was he from telling them, gentlemen, I am your spiritual prince, pray pay me my revenues. Paul was a witness of the resurrection, a disinterested witness, and claimed no dues ; though others since do in his name, without being real witnesses of the resurrection, or disinterested witnesses of the resurrection, or disinterested witnesses of any thing else about it.

Disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus. Mark here, my beloved, that both schools and synagogues, or churches, were open to him, though he was but a new comer, and a non-conformist. Mark, moreover, that he barely disputed or reasoned. He was a stranger to the doctrine of compulsion. He was an Apostle, by virtue of whose words and power, all clerical acts are pretended to be done ever since : and yet he himself did none, satisfying himself with saving souls, by exhortation and the assistance of the spirit, which are not clerical acts. He was the chief pastor upon earth, and held his commission immediately from God ; but he imposed nothing but his advice, reason, and good words upon those that heard him. He could have forced them (had the spirit so directed) to have swallowed implicitly all that he said ; and either destroyed or distressed all who refused. But the Lord Christ, my brethren, in his dealings with human kind, never uses means that are inhuman.

Here you may distinguish the spirit of Christ from the spirit of high-church. For trow ye, my friends, that Christ or his Apostles ever delegated to weak and passionate men, powers and privileges, which, infallible and inspired as they were, they never assumed to themselves? Let us wonder, my brethren, at the impudence of some men in black!

And this continued for the space of two years. Observe, it is not said that he kept a curate all the while.

Let us go on to some following verses. And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul; so that from his body were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out from them, ver. 11, 12.

Observe, here are certain signs of a power from God; and they who pretend a power from him, without manifesting the same by certain signs, are certainly cheats and impostors. For a power given by the all-wise God, must be given for some certain end, which will infallibly be brought about. It is not consistent with his wisdom and goodness to give it, and yet leave uncertain that he has given it, when a plain manifestation of it is of the utmost importance to the world, and to the purposes for which it is given. If a man bring not infallible proofs of his power, how shall I know that he has it? Demonstration must go before conviction, and conviction before consent. We cannot embrace for truth, what we take to be a lie. All which will farther appear from the following verses.

Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits, the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, we adjure you by Jesus, whom Paul preacheth, v. 13.

We may perceive here, that the apostles had apes in their own time: fellows who set up for their successors, before they themselves were dead. They were exorcists or conjurers, so called I presume, from their pretending to dispossess haunted houses, by the dint of spells and forms of words. They had now got a new form of words, and were going to work with them as fast as they could, boasting no doubt, great things of their own power. And indeed they took a politick method to resemble the apostle, had they succeeded in it, but they miscarried miserably, as will be shown anon.

But what shall we say of some moderns (more shameless than these vagabond Jews) who will, right or wrong, be successors to the apostles without doing any thing that is apostolick, but what every reasonable man may do as well. They shew no signs but those of gracelessness and pride; and do no wonders, but in the luxury of their lives.

And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so, v. 14. More mimickers of miracles! we see the trade was growing sweet, but the sauce proved sour; for the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know, but who are ye? An angry and contemptuous question, but full of good sense. But the worst follows; and the man in whom the evil spirit dwelt, set upon them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.

Observe here 1st, that we may easily learn what power men have over the devil, by their power over the devil. When Paul gave the word to the man, the devil did not stand shilly-shally, nor pretend to oppose; but one who was employed as the Lord's general, against

the power of darkness, but was forced to march bag and baggage ; and glad, no doubt, that he could troop off in a whole skin.

But it is quite otherwise, when interlopers and craftsmen, in hopes to make a penny of Satan, pretend to drive him out of his quarters, though they come in the name of the Lord. The devil, in this case, sets up the flag of defiance, and tells them they are scoundrels to their faces ; who are ye ? Well spoken, satan ! They were vagabonds, Jews, and priests, and the devil chastized them accordingly. They fled out of that house naked and wounded. The devil got the day, and remained master of the field and baggage. He prevailed against them. They forged a commission, and the Lord Jesus, whose name they abused, would not stand by them.

2. Let us here 2dly, my friends, think it no shame to learn a lesson from the devil, and take no man's word who pretends to command us in matters of faith and spiritual obedience, though he come in the name of the Lord. Let us examine him first, and try our own strength upon him. Who are ye ? A pat question and a proper ! Let us, beloved, never lose sight of it, especially when any man would controul our belief. Be not determined by outside shape and colour. A long gown may cover an exorcist, but let us peep into his inside, search his life and principles ; let us try whether he is an apostle in his heart and his actions ; and if he be not, let us despise him ; yea, let us prevail against him.

3. Observe 3dly, what great and solemn rogueries are carried on in the name of Christ and his apostles ; even conjurers and formalists reap their harvest, as it were, with the sickle of the gospel. And if such bold cheats could be practised, as it were, under this great apostle's nose ; what may not be done now he is so far off ? How many exorcists, how many sons of Sceva, trow ye, have we at this time among us, and in this enlightened protestant country ? Great numbers, God wot ; yea, great societies. Every man, who in the name of Christ or Paul, claims to himself gain or dominion, is a son of Sceva, and can be no guard against the devil, who despises him.— Judge ye now what swarms we have !

4. Observe from hence, 4thly and lastly, the true reason of the great wickedness which is in the world ; namely, because we maintain an army against the devil, of whom he standeth not in awe. In the first ages he was driven out of every corner, and now he possesses every corner ; for why ? they had apostles, and we have the sons of Sceva.

And many that believed came and confessed, and shewed their deeds, v. 18. that is, many who had been deluded and misled by these reverend deceivers, were now undeceived.

And many also of them which used curious arts, brought their books together and burnt them before all men ; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver, v. 19.

How fertile must the world then have been in mysterious and conjuring books ! What systems of nonsense and knavery must have been here ! What glosses, commentaries, and riddles ! For we may be sure, my beloved, these were not books of useful knowledge and learning, or books that taught virtue and morality, since such, without doubt, the apostle would have preserved : but they were juggling and conjur-

ing books, such as contained heathen traditions, with false miracles, and false doctrines, and were probably full of metaphysical distinctions, and the controversial divinity of those days ; such as bundles of foolish sermons, pagan systems, articles of their faith, formularies, lying mysteries, cabalistical nonsense, and the high-church pamphlets of that age ; all opposite to the divine truths uttered by Paul.

So mightily grew the word of God, and prevailed, v. 20. Take notice here, men and brethren, that the ready way to make the word of God grow and prevail, was to burn all the priests's books. Oh, my beloved, that our eyes were also opened ! what fuel should we have for bonfires !

Nothing occurs remarkable between this and the 23d verse, which tells us, that the same time there arose no small stir about that way. And then follows the reason, v. 24, 25, 26, 27. For a certain man named Demetrius, a silver-smith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen, whom he called together, with the workmen of like occupation ; and said, sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth : Moreover, ye see and hear ; that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying, that they be no Gods which are made with hands ; so that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought ; but also, that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

A notable speech, and a fair confession ! He kept a shop for the deity, and got a world of money by this godly trade, and rather than lose it, he will oppose Christianity, and maintain his craft against Jesus Christ.

This mechanical priest, and his brethren, retainers to Diana, had lost many kind customers by Paul's preaching ; their holy gear began to lie upon their hands ; folks' eyes were opened and the cheat disclosed : Upon which the reverend doctor Demetrius and the whole convocation of priests and craftsmen resolve to accuse the apostle as an enemy to the church, and an underminer of its rights and interests. Sirs, says Mr. Prolocutor, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. " Now, if this Paul goes on to persuade people, as he does, that all our gain is built on deceit, and that our trade is of human institution, our function will fall into contempt, and we into beggary."

All this was artfully addressed to the interest and avarice of his brother craftsmen, who sharing the benefit of the cheat, and living plentifully upon ecclesiastical revenues of the established church of Diana, had motives sufficient to engage them in the defence of the said church and cheat.

Now he has a knack for catching the bigots, by telling them, what danger there was of the church ; and lest the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshipped. What pity it was that so pure and primitive a church, and the most orthodox and best constituted church in all Asia, should be in such piteous danger !

1. Observe here, first, dearly beloved, what false knaves and godless infidels these priestly crew were. If they believed that their mistress the goddess, who had indeed the best accustomed church in all Asia,

Was as great as they pretended her to be, why did they mistrust her power to protect her own grandeur and defend herself? Especially against a single man, whom they represented as an enemy to the gods and their church, and who was consequently the more easy to be defeated or destroyed? But if they knew her unable to defend her divinity, and support her church, with them, her priests and tradesmen; then were they in reality cheats and unbelievers, though outwardly grave and zealous votaries.

2. Take notice in the second place, of the wide difference that there is between these high-priests church, and the bible church! The priest's church being a trading church, and money being her end, and grimace her ware, which were the source of their authority and reverence; whatever enlightened the people, marred the market of the priests. By this craft we have our wealth: "While we can by bawling and lying put off our trumpery for religion, it will always sell well; otherwise, it will not be worth a groat; let us contend for our trumpery, and cry, the church!" Accordingly we find the auditory in the next verse actually practising the advice given them by this high-church preacher, and roaring for Diana of Ephesus, or, which is the same thing, for the church. By this craft we have our wealth.

This, my friends, was the spirit of the Priests church, so opposite to that of the bible-church; which being founded upon a rock, fears neither rain, nor storms, nor dissenters, nor false brethren; yea, she is founded upon a rock, which rock is Christ; and whoever trusts in him and believes the scripture, cannot think his church in danger. Indeed, if his church is founded upon hoods and caps, and cringes and forms, and filthy lucre, he may well dread the judgment of God, and the reason of man; for they are both against him and his dowdy, and his church will totter as soon as ever common sense takes it by the collar. By fearing for the superstructure, he owns the foundation to be sandy. By this craft we have our wealth.

These craftsmen keep a rout about the danger of their church. Why, my brethren, it ought to be in danger, like a sorry bundle of inventions and gimcracks as it was. But for the pure, the primitive church of Christ, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Yea, the craftsmen shall not prevail against it, who are the sorest enemies which it ever had—it is founded upon a rock. Paul does not once complain in all the New-Testament, that his church was in danger, nor does any other of the apostles or evangelists. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but the word of the Lord abideth forever. What say our craftsmen to this? Either they know it not, or believe it not. Paul, whenever he mentions dangers or perils, in his epistles, means perils to his own person: nor did he by his own person, ever in all his life, mean the church. But Paul had the spirit of God; he was no craftsman.

We, my beloved, who are Christians, trust to the veracity of God, that he will forever defend the holy revelation that he has given to us. Let us on our part, treat it as becomes its dignity, and omnipotent author. Let us not turn our religion into a play, nor dishonour it with baubles, as the manner of the popish craftsmen is, who convert their churches into puppet-shews and musick meetings; and then, when they are laughed at, cry they are in danger. Pretty fellows! to raise

our mirth whether we will or no, and then make us choak ourselves to keep it in. Their craft is in danger to be set at nought. They know its value and quake, lest other people should know it too. Oh the impudence of craftsmen! how boldly they mock God, and in his name pick pockets!

3. Let us observe, 3dly, my brethren, that the Christian religion, which prevailed against all the powers of the world, cannot be in danger from all the powers of the world: and every church may be in danger but a Christian church. Let us praise the Lord, my Christian friends, that our church is safe.

Proceed we now to the 28th verse: and when they heard these sayings, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians.

1. We may remark here, first, my friends, the violent effects of a hot sermon, however absurd and villanous. Here is Dr. Demetrius whose craft was all his religion, lugs heaven into a dispute about his trade, and tacks the salvation of his hearers to the gain which he made of his shrines; yet this awakened no indignation in the seduced and ill-judging auditory; but streight they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, great is Diana of the Ephesians: The church! the church

2. 2dly, We may remark, that ignorance is the mother of zeal. They were full of wrath. For what? Why for Diana of Ephesus. A God created by a stone-cutter; an insensible piece of a rock, guarded by a band of priests; who, hard as it was, picked a fine livelihood out of it. But Paul had opened some mens eyes, and the loaves began to come in but slowly. This enraged the craftsmen, and they enraged the people. The priests lost customers, and the people lost their senses. Such is the power of delusion over dark and slavish minds! Let but the priest point at a windmill, and cry the church is falling, his congregation will venture their brains to stop the sails. What a rare army does zeal raise, when religion and reason do not spoil the muster, or stop their march!

The next is the 29th verse; and the whole city was filled with confusion; and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

And the whole city was filled with confusion. Who doubts it, when church was the cry, and the priests had begun it? Give them but their way, and allow them but to assert their own claims, they will quickly turn all things, human and divine, topsy-turvey. Here is a whole city thrown into confusion, purely because a branch of the priestly trade, infamous, forged, and irreligious, was like to fall before the word of God preached by Paul.

1st. This shews, sirs, that there is nothing so lying and so vile, that they will not justify. They knew that their church was a creature of their own composing; that the worship performed in it was burlesque-worship, contrived by themselves and paid to a senseless image; and they knew that the whole was an impudent delusion, framed by human invention. And yet, you see, my beloved, how they raise heaven and earth in defence of their forgeries and superstitions. Not a tittle will they part with, not a shrine, not a ceremony. No, rather than this,

they publish lies, they deceive the people, they decry sober piety, they raise a sedition, and confound all things. By this craft we have our wealth.

2. Behold here, 2dly, the different behaviour of truth and falsehood ! or, in other words, of Paul and the Craftsmen ! When men contend for truth, they do it calmly, because they are sure that it will support itself. But error, conscious of its weak foundation, flies instantly for support, to rage and oppression. Paul reasons peaceably and powerfully ; Demetrius deceives, scolds, and raises a mob. But I defy the Craftsmen to shew me one mob of Paul's raising in all the New-Testament.

The Apostle wanted no mob ; he neither blended politicks nor gain with his doctrine ; he had no factious designs ; he meddled not with human affairs ; he taught peace, and he practised it ; he had no grimace to support ; no mock-reverence to acquire or defend ; he abhorred sly fraud, and exposed it : he shewed the people the manifest truths of the gospel, and of reason, and that presently opened their eyes to see the impious delusions and bold impositions of the reigning priests ; and hence began the rage of Dr. Demetrius and his mob.

3. From this you may learn, 3dly, my friends, that one man, with truth on his side, is enough to frighten a whole army, yea, a whole hierarchy of Craftsmen, and to defeat them, if he has but a fair hearing. You see also the graceless methods that red-hot high-priests take, to confute such a man : First, they dress him up as an atheist and an enemy to the church, and then set the mob upon him ; for the law was not against Paul, as we shall see presently, and yet they meant to destroy Paul against law. An implacable tribe ! No power can satisfy them, that has either mercy in it, or bounds to it : Craft is their calling, and lies and violence the tools of their trade.

Oh, my Christian friends ! what wolves are men, yea, what wolves are priests, when they have hardened themselves against the grace of God ! Without meekness and peace there can be no such thing as the fear of the Lord ; witness Dr. Demetrius, and those that are like him. Let us pray for their amendment, that it would please the Lord to take away their reprobate mind.

And having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

Gaius and Aristarchus, dissenters, to be sure, and non-conformist preachers ! Men of Macedonia ; foreigners too ever the aversion of high-church ! Paul's companions in travel. How ! bare companions ? Methinks, that is something familiar, unless perhaps, they were lords archbishops of some country where they did not reside. But Paul, you see, had no spiritual pride, nor received his fellow Christians upon the knee, as some who pretend to be his successors at Rome and elsewhere, do in our days.

They rushed with one accord into the theatre. Ay, they had got their prey, a brace of non-cons, and carried them into the play-house to bait them. What hooping and hallooing, I warrant ye, about the two godly Christians ! How many fanaticks, think ye, they were called, and disturbers of the peace of Diana's high-church ? Doubtless they were charged with writing books and papers against Diana's clergy, and the established gew-gaws ; and perhaps, Paul was suspected

for having a hand in them, and some of his epistles were produced to make good the charge. Well ! here they are, the priests their accusers, the mob their judges, and truth their crime ! Men and wickedness are still the same ; we have seen the like in our times.

And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not, v. 30, here is, on one hand, the boldness of a man, who has God for his guide ; and on the other, the prudence of men, who knew the mercy of priests and mobs. And therefore, certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring him that he would not adventure himself into the theatre, v. 31.

The 32d verse is pregnant with instruction. Some therefore cried one thing, and some another ; for the assembly was confused, and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

Some cried one thing and some another. The true genius of a rabble, led by their priests and their passions, against peace and against religion ! They are united in their zeal to do mischief, but they differ how they shall go about it. They are for the church, Diana's church, it is true ; and shew it by rage and noise : but they are under no rules, except the general one taught them by the craftsmen, namely to be fierce for the church, against the apostle ; for the rest, every man is his own master, and every man will be heard first.

A rare picture of our present mob, headed by one of themselves in a gown ; I mean our modern Demetrius. I think the man is no great craftsman ; but he has got Diana in his head, and he himself is in the head of the rabble. But as to the point of understanding, we may throw him and his rabble together into one short prayer, and cry with our blessed Lord, when the Jewish priests were putting him to death, for bearing witness against their carnal inventions, their hypocrisy and their cruelty ; Father forgive them, for they know not what they do.

The assembly was confused. There was no order, no reason, no moderation among them. The very type of our high church mob again ! And the more part knew not wherefore they were come together : that is, though, as I said before, they came determined to do mischief, yet they were at a loss what species of it to go about, till their general, the priest, gave them the word. Oh my beloved, let us lament the horrible state of those poor unregenerate souls, whose pastors feed them with poison instead of the food of life, and teach them rage instead of religion. Take warning, sirs, I say unto you take warning ; beware of Diana and her craftsmen, and cleave to your bibles as you love your souls.

And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews (the believing Jews) putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with his hand, and would have made his defence unto the people. But when they knew that he was a Jew (that is a believing Jew) all with one voice about the space of two hours, cried out, great is Diana of the Ephesians ! v. 33, 34.

Was there ever such a couple of twin-cases as theirs and ours ! Verily, our high church bigots and ragamuffins are the undoubted descendants of Diana's Tories at Ephesus sixteen hundred years ago. Nor is the breed one whit mended ; they are still the blackguard of the craftsmen, blind, outrageous, and loud.

We too, my brethren, would, like the good Alexander in my text, make our defence unto the people ; but they will not hear us. Pray mark the different manner of our disputing from theirs, and the contrary arguments we use ! we appeal to the bible ; they cry, the church ! and answer the word of the Lord with a brick-bat : oh horrible !

Great is Diana of the Ephesians ! high-church forever ! and 'tis likely they swore to it. This was the cry for the space of two hours. Poor souls ! it was all that they could say, and all that their priests had taught them to say, great is Diana of the Ephesians ! Was ever church more pithily defended ! Certainly the craftsmen of our days have learned their logick from their Ephesian predecessors. Great is Diana of the Ephesians ! I have heard a sermon a full hour long upon the same subject, and yet not more said, nor better.

You have already my beloved, heard two speeches, one from the craftsmen, and the other from the mob. Dr. Demetrius being in the chair, tells his brethren of the trade, that by this craft (observe, by this craft !) they had their wealth. This is the first part of his sermon ; and in troth, he puts the best leg foremost, and uses his strongest argument first : he fairly puts the stress of his faith upon the ready rhino, and in the very dawn of his discourse, shews himself to be orthodox. I dare say the whole convocation was convinced. He has however, a rare gudgeon behind for the mob ; and what should that be, trow ye, but a charge of heresy against Paul ? The apostle had the assurance, to publish, forsooth, that they be no gods which are made with hands : terrible atheism against the established divinity ! and you see what a bitter spirit it raised.

This, my friends, was the priest's speech or sermon. Now hear the mob's speech once more, for it is a rarity, as we say in Berkshire. Why, they cried out till their throats were jaded, great is Diana of the Ephesians ; and lugged a couple of painful dissenting ministers into the bear garden, where I am sorry we must leave them to the mercy of high-churchmen.

Now, my Christian friends, you shall hear a third speech, which by its honesty, moderation and good sense, will refresh you after all the knavery and impudence in the craftsmen, and all the sotishness and fury in the people.

And when the town clerk had appeased the people, he said, ye men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the image which fell down from Jupiter ? Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and do nothing rashly : For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess. Wherefore, if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies ; let them implead one another. v. 35, 36, 37, 38.

This is the speech of a layman and a lawyer ! Think ye not, my friends, that he was a low churchman ? I wot he was.

Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against. Right, Mr. Town-clerk ! their dowdy image was established by law ; and if it had been a broomstick, it would have had the priests on its side.

and must have been worshipped : where the carcass is, there will the ravens be gathered together.

Ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly. So they would, if the priests had let them alone. But the craftsmen had goaded their sides with the cry of the church, till the poor reprobates were stark mad.

What man is there that knoweth not, &c. Why, every body knew that Madame Diana's palace at Ephesus had more superstition and pater-pence paid to it, and consequently, had a greater swarm of chaplains, than all the divinity shops in Asia besides. She had men and money of her side. What ! could not all this secure her ? No ; her bully boys were afraid of Jesus Christ, and two or three dissenting teachers, his servants.

And the image which fell down from jupiter. Fell down from jupiter ! what great liars some priests are, my beloved ! They will needs fetch all their fables and filthy ware out of Heaven itself ; and yet who has less interest there ? Their very ballads and raree-shews are fathered upon divine right. Oh sirs, the brazen front of some men ! The town-clerk, here conforms himself to their manner of speaking : but take my word for it, the man knew better.

The image which fell down from jupiter. As I was just now saying, all the priests' lumber comes from God ; and yet they are scared out of their wits, lest man should take it from them : as if God could not defend his own gifts and institutions. 'This preposterous conduct bewrays them. Either they believe not in God ; or know that they belie him : Both cases, my brethren, are very common. Whosoever feareth the Lord, need not fear what man can do unto him.

Mr. Town-clerk proceeds. For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your Goddess.

Well urged, " If the men are innocent, why do ye abuse them ? If they preach false doctrine, why do ye not confute them ? If they come not to your established church, why do ye not conceive them that they ought to come ? Or, because ye cannot answer them, do ye therefore mob them ? It is plain, that the honest men have neither stolen any of your madam's consecrated trinkets, nor called her whore."

Wherefore if Demetrius and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies, let them implead one another.

Better still ! This is reasoning now ; a practice which the craftsmen do not care for ; the arm of flesh is their best argument, and at that too they are generally laid in the dirt. " Gentlemen, (says the town-clerk) it is evident that ye distrust your cause, by not trusting the merits of it to the law. All external advantages are for you ; ye are in your own town ; ye have most friends and most money ; and let me tell ye too, gentlemen, ye have most assurance, else I should never have found you here bawling for your church and breaking the law, and to your eternal scandal, besetting with your numbers a few harmless men, whose only arms lie in the innocence of their lives, and in the force of what they say. If you are vanquished at these weapons, have the honesty to own it, or for shame be silent. If these men, gentlemen,

“speak against the law, why punish ye them not by the law? But if ye have no law against them, neither have they any transgression.”

What answer, trow ye, did the Craftsmen, or their calves, the multitude, make to this? Why verily, such an answer, I guess, as they are wont to make to us every day: I suppose they damned him for a whig, and so got drunk, and went home.

Oh, my friends, the deplorable condition of men that are out of Christ! And such are they who take their religion from the Craftsmen. The worshippers of Diana would have been as outrageous for one of her beagles, had the Craftsmen told them that the beagle came down from Jupiter. My brethren; let us cleave to our bibles, yea, I say unto you, let us cleave to our bibles.

III. I come now to my third and last general head, namely, to end my discourse with a short word of application; having, as I went along, anticipated myself, and made several observations which would also have arisen pally here.

The great inference I shall make is, that Craftsmen or high churchmen, are at odds with conscience and truth, and afraid of them. And indeed, to do them justice, though in relation to God and religion, there is no believing what they say; yet whenever they reason from their own interests, they reason well. By this craft we have our wealth.—As to their flourish about Diana and her high-church, it has not, in point of argument, common sense in it. All they assert is, that all Asia worshipped her; as if, because Diana was then uppermost, therefore Jesus Christ ought to have been kept undermost. They could not stand Paul’s logick; he appealed to facts, he appealed to reason, he appealed to conscience.

They therefore (that is, Diana’s high-priests, or the overseers of her topperies, and fingerers of her gain) form a design to oppress a man whom they could not answer. There was no bearing it, that men should be conducted in their religion by inward conviction and the grace of God, and not by them, who had no advantage from either, for the support of their impositions.

Beside, if all external trumpery and grimace in religion, were certainly ridiculous and vain, as the Christian religion certainly teaches: if postures, cringes, shrines, musick, and the like bodily devotion, were so far from signifying any thing, that they were a certain and pernicious contradiction to the simple institution of Jesus, whose will was fulfilled by believing in him, and living well; then were the Craftsmen like to be but little revered, and to have but little custom for their shrines and their small wares. A priest dressed up in an antick coat, and making mouths before a dead image, would make a merry figure before the people, instead of an awful one, as formerly; and in the midst of all their holy hubbub and solemnity, a Christian need but ask them one short question, who required these things at your hand? and they were confounded.

What do they do therefore in this case? Do they defend their church-gear by reason, or by reason confute Paul? No: Paul asserted, that they be no gods which are made with hands; the most self-evident truth that ever was asserted by any man. They cannot answer it; nay yet will they own themselves in the wrong; but they will punish the apostle for being in the right. Well: in order to do this, do they

go to law with him? Not that neither? Paul and his companions had offended no law: They were peaceable men; they were loyal subjects, and good liveries: They were contenders for virtue and piety; and they had not uttered a syllable against Dian's idol, but what resulted from the eternal truths which they delivered.

What course then do the Craftsmen take with them? Why a very extraordinary one in itself, but very common with them; even the course of unprecedented power and oppression. They were chargeable with no legal crime; all their offence was, that they enraged the Craftsmen, by opening the gospel day-light upon the dark minds of the mis-led multitude. They therefore shew their rage, and have the innocent men seized and deprived of their liberty, without the shadow of any legal process against them. Nay, it does not appear that they had yet found a name for the crime that they alledged, but the men were confined at random, and probably put to great charges.

This shews their spirit; and that priestly rage will be gratified over the belley of truth, of innocence, of humanity, of law, and of religion itself. It cannot brook the least good office done to human-kind; all its absurdities are sacred; and yet nothing is sacred enough to mollify or restrain it, ever unforgiving, ever gnashing its teeth. Truth will perpetually be its foe, and therefore it will perpetually be in a flame.

And this shews too the amiableness of an opposite spirit; I mean, the amiable spirit of the gospel. Where did our blessed Saviour, who held all power in Heaven and earth, and could command legions of angels; where, or when did he, in the midst of dangers, opposition, and abuses, ever oppress or punish even his unbelieving and implacable enemies? Where did ever Paul, who had the power and assistance of the Holy Ghost, and who had the power and assistance of miracles, where and when did ever he shew any resentment to his bitterest foes among the Jews, or his most idolatrous gainsayers among the Gentiles?

And what account is to be given for this diametrical opposition between these two spirits? I mean the spirit of the gospel, and the spirit of high-priests? Why, none but this, that Christ and his apostles sought no empire but over wickedness and error, by the sole means of grace, gentleness, and persuasion; and they who have no opposite ends to serve, must bring them about by delusion, violence, and force. This I will maintain is a certain criterion to mark out truth and falsehood, and true and false teachers. And I defy all the priests upon earth to shew, that the internal religion of Jesus, wants for its stay or its advancement, the external influence of worldly power. It was always purest, and flourished most, when all human power was against it. Slaves and hypocrites may be made by it; but religion rejoices in liberty and sincerity.

When men are angry in defence of their opinions, and oppress for their sake; let them not belye Christ, and say, it is for him: but let their passions be made to answer for what nothing but their passions can produce. Why must ambition, avarice, and revenge, be fathered upon religion, which abhors them all? Why must bitterness and cruelty, be laid at the door of the father of mercies? *Pudet hæc opprobria nobis, &c.*

We cannot bear such violence offered to our reason and our language, as any longer to bear things called by wrong and unnatural names; or

to see barbarous and impious actions varnished over with holy colours and godly pretences. It gets the better of our patience, and is an affront to our religion. We cannot find Christ in the actions of Belial; nor can we see the holy man in the oppressor. They that would resemble Jesus Christ, must do as he did, and not do what he never did; and they who will in any case follow the religious measures taken here by the idolaters of Diana, in the case of Paul, must forego their title to Christianity, and argue as these idolaters did, by this craft we have our wealth: And then the religion of the New-Testament will not be profaned in their quarrel.

But why seize Paul, or any body that belonged to him? Is one man such a terror to many, that he must be punished before it appears that he deserved any punishment at all, and before he is heard; or is it dangerous to hear him? And are they afraid of his defence in a legal trial, as much as of his preaching and of his reasoning?

It is plain that downright oppression, that is, power without law, was the whole scope of their proceedings, and revenge their only motive. It is plain, that Paul was not running away: His whole business was to publish truth; he was at Ephesus on purpose; he did it every day; he preached in publick; he taught in their synagogues, he disputed in their schools. And he did all this so publicly and so effectually, that the Arch-Craftsman charges him with having persuaded and turned away much people. Aye, that griped; his reasoning prevailed, and the craft was in danger.

Let us now, my beloved, mark the very different situation of Paul and his adversaries; they were in possession of an established church, and of all its revenues, and of the superstition of the people, who run mad for the church at the pleasure of the priest. The law, no doubt, was partial to them, being made by men of their own religion; and the judges and magistrates were all of the same. The people were of opinion that their church was of divine institution, and that heaven was on their side. The philosophers, and all they who governed their schools, and had the education of youth, were of that church, being every one heathens, except perhaps a few who judged for themselves, and could distinguish natural religion, instituted by God, from the absurd medley of rituals, invented by the priests. The Christian religion was as yet but in its infancy. In short, the Craftsmen governed all things; earth was in their possession, and heaven they pretended was their champion.

Here are securities and advantages enough to put truth out of countenance, had truth been amongst them. In reality, she wants not so many. But falsehood can never have enough. The Craftsmen knew this, and shewed that they did so by their outrageous behaviour.

Let us now view Paul, and see what terrible arms he bears, that are so frightful to the Craftsmen; he was a stranger, he was a dissenter; he had no equipage to dazzle people's eyes; no pompous garments to win their reverence, nor wealth to bribe their affections; he sought no popularity, by indulging men in their vices, or encouraging them in their errors. In short, all the numerous advantages of his adversaries, the priests, were so many obstacles and disadvantages to him, the apostle. To conclude, he had only truth on his side; which rendered him an over-match for all the priests then in the world. All the privi-

lege, all the advantage which he desired, was a fair hearing. This, it seems, he had obtained of the town; and it had its effect. Here was his crime, and here began the priestly fury, the fiercest, the most brutish of all others.

Shameless men! was it not enough that reason and religion were both against you; and that you would neither be proselytes to them yourselves, nor suffer, with your wills, that others should: But must you likewise be proclaiming their invincible power, and your own imbecility and nakedness, by virulently using direct, undisguised force, to stop their mouths? What impudence! What folly!

What! you that boasted your conformity to the law, and your establishment by the law! you that were the possessors of all scholarship! that were proprietors of the arts and sciences, and of the great endowments given for their support! you that instructed the young and the old, and controuled the consciences of both! you that were the sacred administrators of religion! you that shut and opened heaven and hell! you that were the privy-counsellors of the gods! In the name of amazement what could undermine you; what could annoy you; or, if you are not hurt yourselves, why do you oppress others? By this method you do but shew your cloven feet. Jesus we know, and Paul we know, but who are ye?
G.

A
LETTER

TO A GENTLEMAN AT EDINBURGH, &c.

SIR—You desire to know something of the present spirit and conduct of our clergy ; a curiosity to which you are prompted by the behaviour of your own, who, you say, are so zealous for the welfare of your souls, and to concern themselves in all your affairs, even in such as relate only to your persons, families and diversions. That in former times, the clergy men, their predecessors, were wont to mix their reverend spite and impertinence with their ghostly care, to confound spirituals with temporals, and to dictate in all things, is what I have heard ; but was I hope that a freer spirit with an increase of liberty and sense, had put an end to such ecclesiastical intrusion, and taught the present set, that, as their ministry is known to be bounded by the bible and the civil constitution, they ought to keep themselves warily within the limits of their ministry ; that if they break the bounds within which they are placed, and usurp a jurisdiction which they have not force to maintain, the people will scorn their fairy dominion, and they will lose their credit, by grasping at power. The authority of nurses and pedagogues, is confined to infants and pupils ; it is stinted in time as well as in measure, and ends where childhood ends, and where the years of discretion begin. Should an old woman take upon her to direct my youth, because she nursed and whipped me, when I was a babe ; or should my tutor, who taught me to decline verbs or to chatter logic, when I was a boy, seek to shew his pedantic talents to controul me when a man ; I should be apt to look on the nurse and the tutor, though perhaps alike wise, yet alike unfit for mastership and government.

The province of our spiritual nurses is restrained to officers purely spiritual. In the conduct of domestick and civil life, in the rules, of good sense and business, or even in those of just thinking and reasoning ; they are generally, of all men, the most unfit to direct or advise.— Besides their eminent inexperience ; besides the narrowness of their spirit, and that their judgment is as defective and awkward as is their dress and behaviour ; they generally meddle with the affairs of other men from motives entirely despicable and selfish, from pride and peevishness, from resentment or revenge, or for some paltry advantage, for fondness of being courted or feared, of being thought wise and important, or from some other consideration unworthy of a man of sense, or honour, or spirit.

It is to no purpose to say, that they only aim at correcting vice and ill principles. For they often create vice, and find it where it is not, in harmless mirth and amusement, and in recreations where not only all decency and regular behaviour is observed, but where vice and impertinence are ridiculed and lashed, and where lessons of morality and honour, are recommended and enforced. And for ill principles, what they call so, are often no other than harmless speculations and inquiries after truth, or the result of such inquiries; often the most noble and beneficent notions, such as represent the Deity uniform, dispassionate and impartial, abhorring human cruelties, forgiving human weaknesses and mistakes, pleased with a sincere heart, nor expecting more from his creatures than he has given them, and disengaged from all little prejudices in favour of sects and parties.

This creating and multiplying of sins, and finding transgressions where the bible finds none, has what the world calls policy in it; because the more sin abounds, the more necessary ghostly men are tho't: and this policy they have improved so notably, where they have been encouraged, or even suffered, that they have turned almost every thing into sin, except what is the most wretched and unmanly of all sins, that of adoring and obeying priests. But this policy is attended with one flagrant inconvenience: Every man of discernment will be apt to ask; if iniquities are thus increasing, and men grow daily worse, in spite of such numerous monitors, in spite of their holy counsels, their pious examples, their awful and repeated denunciations; then what avails an expensive army of priests, who own themselves daily conquered and utterly unequal to the adverse host? This looks like a confession that either Satan fears them not, or that they do not all that might be done against Satan.

In popish countries there are several transactions which appear like palpable juggles between the Devil and the friars; particularly in the business of exorcism, and casting out evil spirits: The Devil in possession often holds out a long and inveterate siege, and when he is at last ejected, he is free to enter into the same person again or into somebody else. If they have indeed power over the Devil, why do they not cast him quite out of the world, at least out of the country? Would we not think that a general mocked us, if he asserted that he had beaten the enemies every where, driven them out of every town and every particular place, but still they were as strong as ever, and still ravaging the country? I should think that he and his troops deserved to be broke, notwithstanding his boasted skill and invincible feats.

Methinks it is not the deepest craft, for holy men armed with such high powers, to be always appearing in a fright, and crying for help from unhalloved laymen, upon every phantom of danger. Against the cause of God, we are assured by himself that the gates of hell shall not prevail; and to such as maintain his cause by his own assistance, what danger is to be apprehended, what human assistance can be wanted? The apostles wanted none against the whole pagan world, against all the hosts of Jewish and Pagan priests, breathing persecution and deadly rage; yet the apostles had no establishment, no revenues, no privileged tribunals to harangue in, no laws against hereticks or gainsayers, nor even against blasphemers; and were but a few men dispersed over the world, without money, without mobs, and even without university education.

At present, and for many ages past, we have had apostolic men by thousands in every country, and millions of money they have cost almost every country to maintain them. They are protected by laws sufficiently indulgent, and without number. Schools are erected and supported at the publick expense for their education; they themselves govern these schools, and conduct the national teaching, both in the schools and in the pulpits. The first thing learned by infants, is to reverence them; they catechize us when children, they instruct our youth, and when we are men, we are not manumitted from their instruction. Young women are partial to them, old ones adore them. When we are in health, we wait upon them for admonition; and when sick, receive their counsel and discipline at home. 'Tis they that exhort, they that rebuke, they that preach to the people, they that pray for them; 'tis they who administer the seals of the covenant, work a holy and imperceptible change in wine and bread and water, and they who utter ineffable mysteries: They bless, they curse; they offer Heaven, they possess earth; they denounce damnation; they cry aloud, they threaten, they terrify: They are ambassadors from God; they know his will; they bear his authority, they communicate his intentions, deliver his commands, distribute his rewards and terrors, apply his blessings and judgments: They shut the gates of paradise; they open those of hell; they admit us into Christ's holy church, they nurture us in it, or exclude us out of it, and are daily apprizing us of their own power and importance.

Now what can annoy, what ought to frighten or alarm men thus endowed and revered; thus adored and exalted thus dear to Heaven; thus absolute upon earth; thus encompassed and guarded by securities divine and human, so signal and many? It is too great a complement to the powers of darkness, and, in my opinion, inconsistent with orthodoxy, to suppose them a match, much more an over-match for the children of light; especially for the envoys and representatives of the Almighty. This would be introducing a terrible doctrine amongst men; it would be finding a reason and an apology for the worship paid by the wild Indians to the evil spirit; who being an enemy to God, and long since vanquished and damned, can never be an object of terror to sound believers: The wicked one has no armour that is proof against a lively faith, which, as it can remove mountains, must easily drive away satan. It is therefore want of faith, to fear the devil, whom even free-thinkers and unbelievers fear not. It is indeed matter of lamentation, that Christians, yea, the directors and conductors of Christians, should have less courage than men who are given up to a reprobate mind; men left to uncovenanted mercy, and without shield or fence against the assaults of the enemy.

You therefore surprize me, by telling me, as you do, that a pantomime, a poor player, Tony Ashton, and his comedians, have been able to ruffle and disquiet the minds of the reverend ministers of the Kirk. What tools he brings with him, terrible to the hierarchy, I cannot conceive. The laws, the gospel, and private persons, are protected by the civil power: And if Tony can hurt and insult neither religion, nor Caesar, nor particulars, how comes he to occasion such uproar and alarms?

Doubtless there are several plays too gross and licentious; and so,

sometimes, have been many sermons : Yet, when a preacher has abused the privilege of preaching, advanced wild opinions, and uttered dangerous and ridiculous follies, as, upon occasions, has happened ; it has not been allowed to interrupt or contradict him. Nay, when the civil power has questioned him for insulting or calumniating the civil administration ; his brethren have waxed wroth and outrageous, that any of their body should be questioned at any tribunal but their own : A right and impunity which, I think are claimed as sturdily by the fathers of the kirk, as by our high-church, or the high-church in Italy.

But as this extravagant claim implies, that all rights and powers whatsoever do directly or indirectly appertain to themselves, and dooms all men to a vile and blind dependence upon the clergy in all things ; so it should warn every man, who would not blindly tread in the steps, and hang by the cloak or the cassock of a pedagogue, to preserve an independence upon the clergy in things where the clergy have nothing to do. Other commission, than that of counselling and exhorting such as will hear them, I know none that our blessed Saviour has given them ; and this he has given to all men.

What have the parsons to do with our recreations and amusements ? Does the gaiety and openness of the spirit, occasioned by festivity and diversion, lead to sin and lubricity ? Who told them so ? Upon me it had never any such effect ; and by what rule do they judge ? In my opinion, the opposite commotions of spirit, those of bitterness, ferocity, and uncharitableness, are in themselves sinful : odious and unsociable, I am sure they are, and the genuine attribute of monks and cynicks.

With pretences equally just, may they claim the direction of our persons, tables, and dress. The ladies must not wear fine silks, nor the men fine perriwigs, for fear of exciting concupiscence, and alluring one another : Nay, they must not wear fine linnen, nor wash their faces, for the like theological reason. They must not enter a tavern, for fear of being drunk ; nor be merry, for fear of being profane ; nor eat a good meal, nor deal in sauces and dainties, for fear of pampering the flesh.

There is no length to which such impertinent reasoning, when it is once admitted, will not go : And, in effect, we see that in every thing which passes within the heart of man or woman, or in their dress, eating, drinking, and general oeconomy, the Romish priests act the busy-body, and assume to be comptrollers. Even in the conjugal pleasures, those between a man and his wife, they assert a right to be informed, and to dictate. They of that religion know this by experience ; and by reading their books of confession and casuistry, every one may know it. What in the name of wonder is it to a man who deals in spirituals, whether, when a woman in bed with her husband lays her leg upon his, he is to take it for a signal, and obey it, though she say never a word ? Yet this query is put by a grave casuist, and answered in the affirmative ; *imo certe*, says he, *propter modestiam servas*. So favourable was the good doctor to the ladies !

This meddling of theirs in every thing, and meddling like masters and governours, will make people tired and uneasy to be under their direction in any thing : So that where they are not armed with the civil sword, and the terrors of an inquisition, as, I thank God heartily, they are not like to be with us : they will lose the credit which they might

otherwise preserve, and grow contemptible, by being troublesome and impertinent. The pulpit is their province, and even that is a province which they should exercise with modesty and wariness ; especilly in a generation like this, when people have learnt to assert their natural liberty, and the use of their senses, and to dispute the truth of positions which they judge to be doubtful or false, however imperiously maintained by men of reverence and name.

That authority which depends only or chiefly upon the esteem and opinions of men, is exceeding precarious, and will decay or perish, as those opinions alter, or that esteem is lost or lessens. Many have lost all credit by carrying it too high, or by maintaining it by false and deceitful supports. What has been the consequence of all the wild and unmeasurable claims contended for in behalf of churchmen, by Dr. Hicks, Mr. Leslie, and the other champions of that cause ? It is true they were greedily swallowed by many of the selfish and aspiring clergy ; infatuated many weak brains amongst them ; and deceived several of the people, chiefly the vulgar in condition or understanding : But their triumph was short and contemptible. These extravagant demands for extravagant power in ecclesiasticks, occasioned a number of such answers, as have not only set the authority of churchmen very low in the opinion of almost all men, and demonstrated, that from Christ they derive no power, or revenue at all, but for all that they have, must be beholden to laymen and the law ; but they have likewise, by reasoning and examples upon that subject, shewn the spirit of the ecclesiasticks, almost in all times, to have been so tyrannical vindictive, and rapacious, that most men are become loth to trust them with over-much wealth or power ; or indeed with any, independent upon the civil government.

As the writings of these divines were visionary, absurd, and indeed arrogant, full of principles destructive of civil liberty, and all liberty, opposite to the spirit of the reformation, and contrary to all good sense and all modesty ; and yet greedily read and approved by numbers of the inferiour clergy ; men who had better sense and discernment, and wished well to the free constitution of their country, conceived indignation at the propagating and encouraging of notions so wild and mischievous ; and have exposed them so effectually, that such notions, and the authors of them, are now as much contemned, as they were insolent and chimerical. Such, in truth, was the scheme of these nonjurors and their followers ; so exorbitant and wicked it was, that nothing but blind popery, settled in the church, and absolute tyranny in the state, could have supported it ; and, I think, it is plain that both these supports were intended to be introduced. Indeed, the scheme itself necessarily implied them ; and without them it was a mere dream.

It is true, that some of these high contenders for unbounded power in the church and the crown, wrote against popery, and set bounds to the prerogative in church-matters. But it is equally true, that they only contended against the popery of the pope, and against owning the jurisdiction of Rome : They, at the same time, boldly asserted a power to themselves equal to that of the pope ; asserted all the dreadful, all the selfish and lucrative, and most of the extravagant positions of popery ; such as the right of knowing hearts by confession ; the power of damning and saving ; prayers for the dead ; extreme unc-

tion ; great and princely power and revenues, all bolden in their own right without depending upon the civil power, and even in spite of it. If I must be enslaved or oppressed by an imperious, assuming priesthood, what is the difference to me, whether my oppressor live at Rome, or Canterbury, or Edinburgh ?

The manner also in which these high-church writers treat the crown is most insolent, shameless, and dishonest. They exempt themselves, and all that is theirs, which is whatever they have a mind to call so, from all cognizance or authority of the civil power of the prince. Their persons, they say are sacred, as well as his ; nay, more sacred, and their possessions defended by privileges divine : so that though they surrender him the laity, to be used or spoiled, fleeced or flayed, as he pleases ; though they belie the holy name of God to sanctify oppression, to secure the oppressor, and to terrify the poor abused sufferers from lifting up their hand, or even their voice, and complaints, for relief ; though they call every attempt to preserve their persons and property, and to resist insulting spoilers, a resisting of God, and for it threaten damnation : Yet, if he dare but to touch themselves, dare to meddle with their revenues, to enter the sanctuary, or to claim any share of their wealth or jurisdiction ; heaven and earth are summoned to assist them, and to resist him ; woes are denounced against the faint heart and the feeble hand ; and the crosier is reared against the sceptre.

Is not such impudent conduct enough to open the eyes of all men, even of the most stupid, bigotted and blind ? To see religion turned into a manifest market of power and wealth ; the great God made the voucher of an execrable bargain between the oppressor of men in their persons, and the oppressors of men in their consciences ; to see men tied up or let loose, made tame or furious, crouching under unrelenting tyranny, or armed against legal power, just as they are directed, scared, or inflamed by priests ! To see these priests claiming to themselves, all sorts of privileges and wealth and power without bounds ; to see them assuming principalities and power, by virtue of successourship to the poor, wandering, and persecuted apostles ; and yet denying the abused laity, from whom they have all things, to have a right to any thing, not even to their property and their senses ! Will such clergymen, after this, complain that such clergymen are not revered ? Men, who by their extravagant and selfish positions, discover a spirit so unchristian and unsociable ; such a one as undermines all the rights and pleasure of human society, and of human life. They are, indeed, contemned ; and upon themselves they have drawn that contempt. Will they complain of the growth of infidelity and profaneness, when, by their example and principles, they had shewn that they meant to debase religion as far as it could be debased, by turning it into an engine for dominion and opulence ; and perverted the gospel into a scheme of grandeur, absurdities, and persecution ? What has propagated infidelity so much as their own selfish tenets and conduct, and the vile use which they made of the bible ; as if it had been nothing else but a patent to exalt priests, and enslave the laity ? Of all the latitudinarian books in the world, the writings of high-churchmen are the most fraught with mischievous and horrible positions.

I wish, for the honour of the whole body of the clergy, that the convocation had at any time branded such infamous and pestilent doctrines, by some just and publick censure, such as they have been very free to bestow upon books and propositions which defended the common rights of conscience and society. By their utter silence in this matter, they have administred a handle to some for suspecting (I hope unjustly) that to assemblies of clergymen, the happiness of the laity was of little concernment, and liberty of conscience a matter of offence: That they had views irreconcilable to the reformation, and the establishment, and were pursuing an interest opposite to that of the publick. What heightened this suspicion, was the manifest partiality of their conduct: While they were assiduously searching after books which defended the civil rights of society, and the unalienable right of all men to think for themselves, in order to censure them; and in doing it, did notoriously misrepresent them; they thought fit to pass over books which asserted the blackest of all iniquities, that of persecution; books which reviled the constitution, struck at the root of public liberty, contended for publick servitude (in the laity only) and boldly revived and maintained the most dangerous and impudent opinions of popery. And when such impious writings were laid before them, their boldness and pestilent tendency shewn, and passages quoted out of them, shocking to the ears of freemen and protestants; still that reverend body persisted to make no animadversions.

What conclusion advantageous to their reputation, could be drawn from a proceeding so evidently unequitable and unjust, when a set of men assuming to be judges, were apparently parties, and had so little regard, or rather so much aversion to righteous judgment, that upon truths the most obvious, upon principles the most benevolent, their wrath and anathemas fell; while the most daring arraignment of private conscience, and the most barefaced insults upon public liberty, civil and Christian, incurred no blame? In one, for example, it was a heinous crime, and loudly censured, to have said, "That our Saviour's kingdom was not of this world;" though after our Saviour himself he said it. But it proved to the convocation no matter of offence, for another to have impiously maintained, that "Heaven itself waited for the sentence from the priest's mouth, and God himself followed the judgment of the priest.—That "kings and queens are to bow down before the priest, with their faces towards the earth, and to lick up the dust of his feet:" with many other mischievous and unhallowed extravagances, to the disgrace of religion and common sense. Was this the way to be revered, to utter as the oracles of God, such impudent and poisonous falshoods, or to defend them, or not to stigmatize them? Was it not rather a way to forfeit all common respect, and to incur universal indignation and scorn?

A family is a small state, as a state is a great family. Now suppose the master or prince of a family, take into his service a chaplain, and give him bread and wages; does this same chaplain take a method to be revered or believed, if he tell the man who maintains him, "I am your spiritual prince; you are my spiritual subject; I can absolve or damn you: you must tell me all the secrets of your heart, let me judge of your thoughts, submit without murmuring or hesitation to my dictates and censure, and be obedient to my discipline. You must

call me your chaplain in no other sense than you say, my Lord and my God. You ought to fall down before me, and lick up the dust of my feet. My government in your family, as a priest, is farther above yours, as you are a layman, than Heaven is above the earth; and my revenue ought to be greater than yours, though you are a prince in your house.

“ And to make you amends for thus sharing with you in your power and riches, I do hereby, in the name of Heaven, doom all your children and servants, that is, all your lay-domesticks, to be your slaves without reserve, and I do assert your authority over them, be it ever so cruel, unnatural and destructive, to be the ordinance of God, and you to be his vicegerent, however wicked and unlike God you prove. But my person and property you must not touch; for I am a sacred person; in all the money and power which I take from you, I am independent and unaccountable; for I am the Lord's priest, and my wealth is God's wealth. It would be sacrilege in you to meddle with either: If you do, you will be damned. And if I can persuade your lady or your son to give me any lands or treasure, for the good of their souls; whatever artifices I use to draw such donations from them, you must protect me in the possession against your grand-children or any other claimant whatsoever: For, to take it from me, or from any future chaplain for ever, would be to rob God and the church.

“ Moreover, if any of your family, your lady, children or servants, should presume to differ in opinion from me, and follow their own conscience, this is schism, it is a damnable sin; for out of the church, that is, without my permission and management, there is no salvation: And such schismaticks, hereticks and gainsayers, you must prosecute, that is, fine, imprison, whip, hang or burn, as I shall direct you: If you do not; you favour hereticks and schismaticks, and I will excommunicate you, that is, deliver you to the devil; and then you are unworthy of any authority, and I will excite your family to turn you out of your house, unless by submission to me, you shew yourself penitent and worthy to be restored: upon this condition, I will recall you, and turn off the person that I put in your room, whom I will call an usurper, if he do not humour me in all things. For, 'tis I who can preserve obedience or stir up strife and fighting in your family, and teach them the necessity of obeying or resisting, by the terrors of divine vengeance, which is always armed when I am angry, and asleep when I am pleased.”

Now would pretences and claims thus impious and shameless, be borne from any particular chaplain, by his particular lord or patron? And yet are not such claims asserted by the high-clergy in general? And do they not affect every individual layman, by affecting the whole body of the laity? They treat us to our faces, like vassals blind and tame, and doom us without ceremony, to bear invasion and tyranny with meek hearts and hands bound. All that we have, is hardly enough for them. Yet were we to treat them as they treat one another, a very small competency would appear a sufficient appointment and maintenance for the successors of the apostles. Do we not frequently see a reverend doctor possess three, five, nay, eight hundred pounds a year, sometimes more than a thousand; and yet out of this great revenue, which he thinks not too much, and hardly enough, though he do

nothing for it, give no more than fifteen, twenty, thirty, or at most forty pounds a year to a curate, for doing the whole duty of the parish? If this be enough for the labour of a clergyman, why do the laity give any where more? If it be not, why does the rich doctor give so little? The curate is furnished with all necessary abilities and qualifications as well as the doctor, and has the same spiritual powers, to baptize, to give absolution and the communion, to marry, preach, pray, bury, visit the sick, and to take tithes if he had any to take.

Thus in the opinion of former bishops, (governours of the church) who often kept curates themselves, when they still retained a good fat living in commendam; and thus in the common practice of the inferior clergy: wages sometimes not much higher than those of a carter, scarce ever so high as those of an exciseman, are sufficient for doing all the functions of a clergyman. Would not this seem a rule to the laity, a rule taken from the best authority in the world, that of the practice of the clergy, how to rate the work and worth of a clergyman? Why should they expect that laymen should value the labour and use of a clergyman higher than the clergy themselves do in fact value it? They will not say, that three, or five, or eight, or ten hundreds a year, is little enough for the sagacity of choosing, and the trouble of hiring a curate for twenty; or thirty, or forty; though sometimes things equally foolish and absurd are said: for there are many laymen who can drive a hard bargain, and pinch their workmen, and we too often find the reverend deputy of a great doctor, full as bad and insufficient as if the churchwardens had picked him up and hired him. I would therefore be glad to know why any man, why, especially a minister of the gospel, who should labour in season, and out of season, should have any revenue, especially a great revenue, for nothing.

But I ramble from my first design, though perhaps had I pursued it, I should not have tired you less. But I am like other authors, who, whilst they please themselves, think that they are furnishing delight to their reader. To your information I pretend not to add any thing, not even in telling you that I am with great affection and sincerity,

SIR,

Your faithful Servant,

G.

2000

A

MONUMENT

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF

JOHN TRENCHARD, Esq.

◆

A GENTLEMAN descended from an ancient family,
And conspicuous for abundant wealth :
Yet neither from his race nor his fortune,
Did he derive his principal renown.
Some boast a glory derived from the lustre of their lineage ;
And rely upon the merits of their ancestors :
Others vaunt the glory of their wealth.
Vain and accidental is all such glory.
His was of his own acquiring, without allay,
Personal and permanent,
The pure result of his virtue and parts.
In his native accomplishments, and in the
Sanctimony of his morals,
He gained splendour surpassing that of his house.
In vigour of spirit, in integrity of life,
In tenderness to his country, to his kindred and
Friends,
Few ever equalled him,
None ever surpassed him.
Whilst yet a youth he attended the bar,
Learned in the laws, and a powerful pleader.
But soon abandoning the strife of suits,
And the pursuit of gain,
He prefer'd retirement and a private life.
His concern however for the publick
(A concern ever inseparable from his thoughts)
He neither renounced, nor exercised in vain ;
Of encroachments and domination of every kind,
A constant and a formidable foe ;
Of publick liberty and primitive institutions
A rigid asserter, a powerful champion.
From observation he knew, from a just principle he suspected
The frailty of human nature and the pravity of men,

With the ambition and artifices of men in power :
Between their avowed pretences and real pursuits he could well distinguish,

As between the worthy magistrate and the lawless ruler ;
Ever resolute to encounter every publick violence,
And all the insolence of power,
With consummate eloquence.

The disbanding of the army after the French war,
In the reign of king William,
By an argument written and published,
Even in his youth he undertook to procure,
Urged it with great force,
And even succeeded,

In opposition to the efforts and rage of the courtiers.
To the highest affairs his abilities were equal :
But deserving publick honours,
And despising them,

He shone in the accomplishments of private life.
To the wild fury of all visionaries and mystists,
To the direful fooleries of all bigots,
His enmity was bent and perpetual,

As men ever ravening against the liberty, against the possessions of
their fellow-citizens.

Eloquently he exposed, zealously he restrained the petulant spirit and
avarice of such men.

That the God of nature, supremely great, supremely good,
Could ever approve wanton cruelty, or devout clamour and empty
sounds,

Or could ever be offended with the mistakes and roamings of the hu-
man soul,

Was what his rational heart could never conceive.

To the age of almost fifty-five he lived,
An age to himself sufficiently long ;

But not so to his country, nor to his friends, nor to his lady.

As he had passed his life without blemish,

He encountered death without fear,

A man by all virtuous men and freemen

Worthy to be forever lamented.

He died on the sixteenth of December, 1723.

Of his genius and abilities there are monuments remaining,

Such as will for ever remain,

Consecrated to time and posterity in writings of various kinds.

THE
INDEPENDENT WHIG:

OR, A
DEFENCE

OF
PRIMITIVE CHRISTIANITY,

AND OF OUR
ECCLESIASTICAL ESTABLISHMENT,

AGAINST
**THE EXORBITANT CLAIMS AND ENCROACHMENTS OF
FANATICAL AND DISAFFECTED CLERGYMEN.**

FOUR VOLUMES IN ONE.

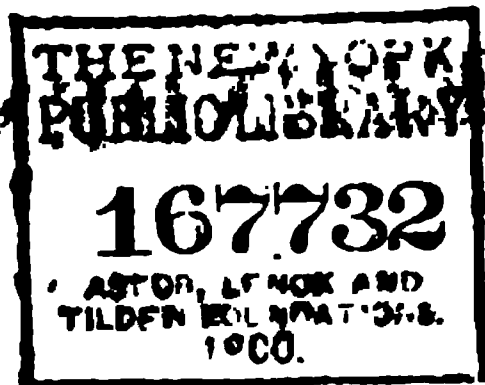
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THE

INDEPENDENT WHIG.

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Of Blasphemy.

BLASPHEMY is like heresy, a big word which they, who make the loudest noise about it, rarely define, and, indeed, rarely can. From hence it comes to pass that this sound is greatly abused, in proportion as it is little understood; and from the uncertainty of its signification, are derived certain advantage to some men, and as certain terror to others: for all false reverence, and false power, and all groundless fears, arise from deceitful sounds on one side, and real ignorance on the other side, and from words not defined, or ill defined. As long as the meaning of names is unrestrained, the use and abuse of names will continue unrestrained; the instances of this are infinite, evident, and universal, pope, priest, power, monarch, mystery, zeal, loyalty, are but a few of these instances.

Blasphemy is a word of the same sort, a word which passionate and crafty men throw at one another in their religious quarrels; and, if you will believe either side, both sides are blasphemers. And thus it will ever be, as long as anger or interest are left to make or measure crimes, and to explain names by their own partial spirit. Men under the bias of passion and known pre-engagements, can never be calm and unbiassed judges. And he is a mad man who would trust his fortune or his soul to the conduct of one who is manifestly biassed, and has avowed demands of money or authority upon both, or upon either.

We have a right to expect the same satisfaction to our understanding from a professor and decider of words, as from a professor of the mathematics, that is to say, a right to examine their propositions, and be convinced before we assent; and if we pay both, he who satisfies us best, ought to be best paid. Mathematicians take nothing upon trust; and therefore amongst mathematicians there are no disputes because there are no uncertainties. If their propositions be not made demonstrations, they are not mathematical propositions; and before a theorem, which deserves proof, be proved, he is a simple man that believes it.

So that in mathematical discoveries, if you will be at the pains to enquire, your enquiry will end in conviction; but if you want the

capacity or diligence to enquire, the discovery is still an uncertainty to you, and no body pretends to constrain you.

A compulsion into persuasion and assent would be reckoned monstrous madness and contradiction in mathematics, or in any science which has any foundation in common sense. You may still believe, if you please, that this little earth stands still, as the important centre of all things ; that the mighty sun, two hundred thousand times bigger than the earth, and all the immense hosts of heaven, were created, and are employed, to patrol about it, and to carry links and tapers to this little dirty speck, scarce distinguishable in the boundless and glorious realms of space ; and that the human pigmy is not only lord of this little globe, but of millions of mighty worlds, of no use to him, few of them visible to him.

This persuasion against truth and demonstration, will always make part of the religion of bigots, who will always be the bulk of mankind ; and it would be cruelty to punish them for folly, which affects not the peace of society ; though it is certain that did not the laws withhold them, they would punish and kill as atheists and blasphemers all those who bring the noblest natural truths to light. I have heard very lately of a Scotch Presbyter, who found a multitude of texts against the astronomical system, and told his hearers a world of angry things which God Almighty said against it. He asserted, that the earth stood still, and the sun travelled round it, in spite of all the mathematical demonstrations that could come from hell ; and, with a *Thus saith the Lord*, added terrible threatenings against the philosophers and free-thinkers of the age, whom he christened blasphemers, and doomed to divine wrath, without any hesitation. This poor mad monk was in earnest ; his nonsense and fury were conscientious ; and all the hardship that should be put upon him, is to keep vengeance out of his hands, which, without doubt, he would execute cruelly, and be merciless for the glory of the God of mercy.

With the bigot, every truth that exposes his devout dreams is blasphemy ; which is a Greek word, that signifies detraction, or evil-speaking, in general ; but as it is used and understood amongst Christians, it means speaking evil of the Deity ; *Maledictio Supremi Numinis*. And as it is a crime that implies malice against God, I am not able to conceive how any man can commit it. A man who knows God, cannot speak evil of a being whom he knows to be blessed and beneficent, the Author and giver of all good, with whom no evil can dwell : and a man who knows him not, and reviles him, does therefore revile him, because he knows him not ; he therefore puts the name of God to his own misapprehensions of God. This is so far from speaking evil of the Deity, that it is not speaking of the Deity at all : it is only speaking evil of a wild idea, of a creature of the imagination, and existing no where but there.

If a man say, with the fool in the Psalms, that there is no God, he speaks falsely, but does not blaspheme ; for he cannot blaspheme what he thinks is not ; and ignorance is not blasphemy. If a man say, that God is cruel and revengeful, and subject to passion and change, as the heathen deities were ; this also is ignorance, and not blasphemy ; he only abuses a false character, to which he ignorantly applies the name of God, and speaks maliciously of a being which he mistakes

for God, and which has no resemblance to God, but is applicable only to Satan, who is an enemy to God, or to Jupiter and Saturn, and the other like fickle and sanguinary divinities of Paganism.

We cannot blaspheme that which we honour. An ancient Pagan could not blaspheme Jupiter, while he really believed him what he called him, *Jovem optimum maximum*, all-good and almighty: neither could one who had contrary sentiments concerning Jupiter, blaspheme the great God in speaking contumaciously of Jupiter, in whom he found none of the marks of the great God. If the priests and followers of Baal really believed their God to be the true God, as they seem to have believed, it would have been blasphemy in them to have spoken contumeliously of him; or rather, they could not have blasphemed him, while they retained that high and awful opinion of him. If they conceived him cloathed with infinite perfections and loveliness, they could not possibly have mocked or hated that which to them appeared perfect and lovely. But if they conceived of him in a different and a meaner manner, their speaking of him as they conceived of him was no blasphemy, because they only speak meanly or contemptuously of a being which was wholly different from the Almighty being who could not be abused by the ill names bestowed upon an idol.

It would indeed seem scarce possible, in common sense, that the bitterest language against *Baal-Peor* could be blasphemy, either in those who believed, or in those who believed not in him. It is manifest, that his priests esteemed him a barbarous and bloody spirit, by their inhuman manner of imploring him to vindicate their credit and his own against the God of Israel, in pursuance of a challenge given them by Elijah the prophet; *And they cut themselves after their manner, with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them*, 1 Kings xviii. 28. They represented him as delighting in human blood, and in human tortures and misery; and the worst they could have said of him could hardly have been blasphemy. But an enthusiasm is really capable of believing contradictions, and of sanctifying the worst nonsense and barbarity, it is probable enough, that these fanatic priests did sincerely believe this abominable and wretched idol to be the true God. And even then the true God could not be blasphemed by obloquies thrown upon a being so utterly unlike him; though Elijah must have appeared to them a great blasphemer, when he mocked their stupid image, and ridiculed their God, as engaged in discourse, or in a journey, or perhaps taking a nap, ver. 27.

All this shews that 'tis impossible to commit the sin of blasphemy, as 'tis commonly understood. If we know God, we must necessarily love him; if we love him, we cannot blaspheme him: and if we defame something which we take for God, but which is not God, the true God cannot be displeased with an indignity offered to a false God. If I honour a false God, I cannot hate or calumniate, nor consequently blaspheme him; or if I do, I do it under an idea which appertains not to the true God; and therefore nothing that appertains to God is blasphemed, though I may ignorantly annex that name to that idea. Much less can another, who owns not my false God, be a blasphemer in exposing him, though I, who have more devotion, and less judgment, may call him a blasphemer: for where there is no divinity, there can be no blasphemy.

my ; and the divinity will not be blasphemed, where it is owned and adored ; nor is it known, where it is not adored.

So that to be able to blaspheme God, malice against God must be added to the knowledge of God ; which I have shewn to be impossible. Men in despair, who no longer expect any mercy from God, do sometimes tack terrible imprecations to his name, and in words are blasphemers ; but they are so only in words. They have no knowledge of God ; if they had, they would not despair. They therefore revile they know not what, a horrible image created by an inflamed and distracted brain, and more opposite to the image of God, than a sober man is to a mad man.

Despair is madness ; and madness is no more a crime than a pleurisy, which is an inflammation in the side, as the other is in the brain. Nor are the words of a man in despair, the worst he can utter, criminal ; no more than a man is indictable for a blow that he gives to his nurse, or his physician, in the rage of a fever. I have heard much treason, and many blasphemous words, uttered in Bedlam : but no lunatic is tried from thence for a traitor, or blasphemer. The most unhappy lunatics are men in despair ; nor are men sinners for being unhappy, nor answerable to God for the mechanical operation of a distemper.

The same defence may be made for the profane ravings of enthusiasm, which is only a distemper in the head. Those ravings are the operations and overflowings of a distemper ; and it would be a barbarous thing to turn a misfortune into sin, and to punish for a disease ; the effects of madness are neither moral nor immoral ; and a mad man can no more be guilty of blasphemy, than an idiot, or a parrot can. Wind cannot blow blasphemy ; and the wild words of a fanatic are only wind modulated by a distempered head. No man knows himself to be an enthusiast, or thinks his enthusiasm foolish or criminal ; and what is not voluntary, is no crime. A man cannot sin in his sleep, nor in his sleeping or waking dreams ; and enthusiasm is a pious dream.

St. Paul, while he was yet a persecutor of the Christian church, and an enthusiast against Jesus Christ, could not blaspheme him before he knew him ; and afterwards he could not, because he knew him. So that at first he only defamed him, through ignorance of him : and this was rashness, but not blasphemy, in any other sense than as all evil-speaking of any one is blasphemy. But I here speak of blasphemy in the usual sense of the word ; and in this sense, neither a Turk, nor an Indian, nor an atheist, nor any man can be a blasphemer. The Jews deny Jesus Christ ; but this is blindness, and not blasphemy ; and it would be a great barbarity to kill or punish men for their blindness, and equally disingenuous and uncharitable to make blasphemy of blindness.

When our arguments for Christianity prevail not with men, as often they do not ; and when the Spirit of Christ is withheld from them, as we see it often is ; we are not to grow uncharitable because they are inflexible, and to call incredulity blasphemy. No means are effectual to bring men to Christ, without the Spirit of Christ, which none but he can give. Will any man say that all unbelievers are blasphemers ? or that a sincere declaration of unbelief is blasphemy ? Did any of the apostles tell any people or nation, to whom they went, that they were

all blasphemers? or that as many as they could not convert, they and their converts would treat as blasphemers, that is, persecute, imprison, and kill them? Or would such men find admission into any country who are apprized of their spirit?

It is dissolving human society to distress men for involuntary mistakes, to which all men in all societies are subject. Nor do we see any sort of men upon earth, or that ever were upon earth, differ more about the sublime and metaphysical notions of God, than those men who would reduce all men to a perfect and impossible unity in notions, and boldly pretend to do that which omnipotent wisdom and omnipotent power has not thought fit to do, and which nothing but omnipotence can do. This is a monstrous doctrine, against nature and Christianity; and though it be not blasphemy in my sense, yet it is blasphemy *ad hominem*; since they that hold it, bring under the head of blasphemy a thousand notions and things, that, compared with this, are innocent and wise.

So much for blasphemy against God, which I have shewn to be impossible. I shall now say something of blasphemy against men; for it is indeed against them that it is generally, if not only, committed; and the holy name of God is called down to skreen and sanctify the bigotry and pride of men. They sometimes annex a religious reverence to actions, names, and opinions, which have nothing to do with religion, and perhaps are ridiculous, and then make it blasphemy to contradict them. Hence sounds become first sacred; and the more absurd and equivocal, the more sacred; and then in proportion as they are easily ridiculed, blasphemy is like to grow more frequent, and consequently more criminal and dangerous.

Thus in the church of Rome, the apostolick succession, infallibility, and the power of the keys, purgatory, and prayers to saints, that is, prayers to dead men for living men, or for other men who are dead too, transubstantiation, the indelible character, the unbloody sacrifice, dominion over consciences, the divine right to tythes, the inquisition, and no salvation in any other church; are all words, and doctrines, and practices, utterly destitute of all common sense, utterly opposite to the New Testament, and to all religion and common honesty, and big with all mischief, and all spiritual and temporal tyranny: but they are all most sacred in that church; and it is the highest blasphemy to reason against them; and death is due to blasphemy, nay, damnation is due to it.

Imposture is supported by terror; and by this means the Popish world is become the spoils of Popish priests. And indeed, wherever priests make reasoning upon or against their system a crime against religion, they bring their system under the suspicion of craft or weakness, and will in time make all men, and the property of all men, submit to their system, as the Romish priests have done, and as all who have the same pretensions would do. With them every defence of truth against craft and lies, is blasphemy; and indeed, all men of different religions, or of different opinions in the same religion, are blasphemers to one another. They draw false and doubtful deductions from scripture, and call the plainest propositions, and the most rational objections against their guesses, blasphemy against scripture; though it is impossible for any man to blaspheme the scripture, by

denying that to be scripture, which he is persuaded is not scripture.

It would be profane in any man to make a mockery of sounds, in which he finds any reverence ; but I believe it to be impossible upon the principles which I have before laid down. No man can mock and reverence the same thing ; much less can a man be profane in ridiculing what he thinks really ridiculous. He may, indeed, be unmannerly ; but ill manners to men are not profane in the sight of God. The more reverence men place in little and ridiculous things, the more ridiculous they become. When the law of a country gives a sanction to words and fashions, and reckons them religious, though they be not a bit more so for the law, yet the law is to be respected ; and if I treat them with contumely, I may be ill bred, but am no blasphemer ; for they are not religious to me.

To conclude : Those who would discover blasphemers with any certainty, must do three things ; First, they must settle and ascertain all the ideas of God ; which none but God can do. Secondly, they must make all men capable of judging of those ideas with certainty ; a task which no human spirit can perform, and which therefore must be also the work of God. Lastly, they must be able to see and to judge infallibly the hearts of men ; a province which the Almighty hath also reserved to himself ; and which none but the Almighty is fit for, no, not the angels. Till they can do all this, they had best take care that by their common charge of blasphemy, they do not mean blasphemy against their own pride and mistakes.



NUMBER 56.

Of mutual Charity and Forbearance.

CHARITY shall be the subject of this paper. By charity, I do not mean alms-deeds, which are only one of the good effects of it ; but by charity, I mean that benevolent disposition of heart which inclines any man, of any religion, to think well, and hope well of every man, of every religion, from whom he receives no injury. For no man can think well of that man, who does ill to any man, let his motive be what it will : and it is always just to punish the authors of injustice. No man has God's authority to injure another ; but all men have his authority to repel injuries, and to defend themselves. If any man's religion teach him to do me harm, common sense teaches me to defend myself : but if his religion, however absurd, frantick, and vain, be only between God and himself, and interfere not with my security and property, I cannot without violence and injustice molest him in it. A man may be a very silly, and yet a very pious man : and if he seem pious, I ought to think him so ; his secret intentions can be known to God only. If indeed he claim dominion over me and my purse, for

the support and reward of his piety, I shall suspect that he has none ; because I cannot conceive that pride, power, and covetousness, are any part of piety, or any way related to it ; or that a passion for the pomp and pleasures of this world, is any proof of a zeal which breathes after the cross of Christ, and the kingdom of heaven, and is entirely detached from the mammon of unrighteousness. Such claims, therefore, as they concern property, and things purely temporal, are questions of civil right, and subject to the awards and discretion of men, and as remote from the considerations of religion and conscience, as one thing can be from another.

But the thoughts and actions which relate only to God, are to be judged by none but him ; nor, let them be ever so wild and foolish, can they be subject to any other jurisdiction. *Humanum est errare & insanire*. There is no pitch of folly and phrenzy, of which the human soul is not capable in matters of devotion ; and none but he who made the human soul, and raised it above the soul of a beast, can set it free from error, and above superstition. If a man will approach God with a whip and a hair-cloth, and seek to please the Almighty by inflicting stripes upon his own flesh ; if he chuse to mix dancing and bawling with his devotion, and aloe with his sauce, I shall desire no part either in his devotion, or his meals. But I have no more dominion over his imagination, than over his stomach. I can only tell him my own opinion and my own taste, if he will hear me ; and he has just the same right over me. Every man who is in earnest in his religion, must chuse his own priest, as well as his own cook, according to his sentiments and his palate : and if he can find neither priest nor cook to his mind, he must be content to say his own prayers, and dress his own victuals. The Christian law leaves him at full liberty to do both. Prayers are only made for those who like made prayers : and whoever says the contrary, is obliged to prove, that either we must pray certain prayers whether we will or not, or not pray at all.

The merciful God and maker of man can never be angry at incurable folly and mistakes : where he only who can cure them, does not, and men cannot, we may be satisfied that he is not offended with them. Nothing is more frequently in people's mouths than the reasonableness and charity of bearing with the infirmities of a weak brother ; but nothing is so seldom practised. If it were universally observed, it would cure all men of uncharitableness, since all men have their weaknesses, even the most learned and most wise. And every man in the world differs from every man in certain tastes, as well as in certain opinions, which are only internal tastes. Every man therefore has some weakness in the opinion of some other man ; for every man judges of another's weakness by his own wisdom. But by this phrase of bearing with a weak brother, is usually meant some particular kindness which we have for some particular man or friend, or for every particular man of the party which we have chosen. Now, why should not every man's weakness be borne with, as well as the weaknesses of our particular friends ? and the weaknesses of all parties, as well as the weaknesses of our particular party ? It is a crying scandal to human reason, and to the Christian religion, that we should have so much charity for the most wicked practices, and none for the most harmless opinions, as all opinions are which produce no

wicked practices. And yet that we are thus preposterously charitable and uncharitable, is manifest from our bearing with the worst vices of men in our own party, and our caressing their persons, while we are outrageously offended with the thoughts, dreams, and harmless gestures of the best men of a different party. This shews that religion is not the quarrel, nor the cause of quarrel ; but pride, interest, and partiality ; and that the holy name of God and religion is prostituted and abused, to gratify a base passion.

All men, even many zealots and enthusiasts speak well of Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, though pagans : but no zealot will speak with patience of the emperor Julian, Porphyry, or Spinoza, though all very great men, and, as far as we can find, all very virtuous men ; two of them we are well informed were so now, however false and absurd many of their opinions about religion were, they were at least as orthodox as the opinions of Plato and Socrates, who were indeed very good men, and subtle disputants, but wretched reasoners in spiritual matters. But the reason of this different treatment is that Socrates, Plato, and Cicero, living before Christianity, did not impugn any of its tenets, as Julian and Porphyry afterwards did. It is therefore plain, that this partiality is not the effect of piety and sense, but of party-spirit, and of personal hatred and anger ; else Cicero and Socrates would be as much railled at, as are Julian and Porphyry, who were not worse heathens than the former. Indeed, all uncharitableness arises from rage, narrowness of mind, ignorance, selfishness, and personal quarrels ; and never from reason and principle, which are calm things, and have no respect of persons.

The uncharitable man thinks that he defends himself by a pretended zeal for the glory of God ; and pays a compliment to his own impiety, at the expense of religion and truth. Zeal for God is inseparable from universal charity. St. Paul has shewn that all the highest Christian graces are nothing without it : and it is my firm opinion that no true Christian grace can subsist where charity does not subsist. St. Peter says, Acts x. ver. 28. That God had shewn him that he should not call any man common or unclean. And verse 34 and 35, he saith, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons : but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." That is, every honest man will be saved, let his opinions and mistakes be what they will ; and upon this principle and authority I am not ashamed to declare, that my charity extends to all sects and nations. I wish that all men were Christians ; and that all Christians were true Christians : but as good wishes are only a part of charity, I likewise believe that the good and wise God, who made us, and sent us hither, and knows the weaknesses of our understandings, and the strength of our passions, will deal more kindly with all men than most men are apt to allow. I have charity even for the uncharitable man, and would no more hurt him, than I would hurt any other madman, whose rage governs him, and who is out of his own power. I would only preserve myself from the effects of his madness, and only bind those hands which are lifted up to destroy me. Uncharitableness is without doubt madness, and is always most predominant in such as have most heat, and least sense. The more blind the more fierce. As is evident from the implicit bigotry of the Turks, and of the Spanish

and Italian Papists : They have renounced all humanity and reason, to make room for distracted and implacable zeal.

NUMBER 57.

The Vanity as well as Wickedness of Persecution.

I go on with my thoughts upon charity, the want of which works so useful effects amongst men ; and makes such melancholy additions to the evils of human life. As if the heats and contentions amongst men were too few, or the passions that produce them too weak, this sacred anger and uproar about thoughts and notions, is every where brought in to swell and aggravate the ugly reckoning.

That any man's opinion, which hurts no man's person, touches no man's property, but is only a speculation or belief concerning God and the world to come, should be able to provoke any man's passion, is so opposite to all the natural ideas of society, to humanity, and to all common sense, that did not one see it, it would in theory appear impossible. But common sense is out of the case, and has nothing to do with it, but to condemn it. It is the ingratitude of bigotry and delusion upon the folly and weakness of nature, and by inveterate custom and ungodly arts made a part of nature. It is infused into the tender spirits of infants, grows up with them, and haunts and infatuates them to their graves : it begins and ends with life, and taints every part of it. But that it is not originally in the soul of man, will appear from considering what the soul of man is naturally prone to. Her first care is that of self-preservation ; which includes the means of living, of food, covering, generation, and defence against injuries : and as the first thought is how to live, the next is how to live well ; the desire of necessities is followed by the desire of conveniences ; and as soon as men have arrived at a life of security, the next study is a life of splendor : and because splendor consists in comparison, and one man has more as another has less, hence arises emulation in men to exceed one another ; and from this emulation proceeds a passion for riches, fame, and power, which are the means, and the ends of splendor. Nor does this passion usually stop till one man has mastered all men, or all that he can. And thus far nature, which has given men desires without bounds, will prompt them to go.

But the utmost power that mortal man can possess, is limited to things visible, and must stop at the persons, actions, and properties of men. It can never controul that which depends not upon the human will, and consequently upon no human power : such are the thoughts raised within us by the motions of objects about us. Alexander and Cæsar conquered the best part of the world : but mad as they were with ambition, and one of them very superstitious, it never entered into their hearts to set up a spiritual monarchy over the religious conjectures and rovinga of the hearts of men. Nor has the successful and armed phrenzy of the Mahometans been ever able to effect it : they have given it over as an impossibility ; and not only tolerate numerous sects of their own, but every sect of Christians in their dominions. The Catholic princes, who

have attempted it, have extirpated and destroyed the best part of their people ; yet their success, gained by so much blood and desolation, is never like to be complete as long as they have any people left. France still abounds with concealed hereticks, Spain and Portugal with disguised Jews and Moors : so that by a conduct more tyrannical and infamous than that of the Pagans and Mahometans, they have only established an uniformity of barbarous ignorance and hypocrisy. The attempt is waging war against nature and the creation : the soul, which acts by the organs, must act differently where the organs differ, as the organs of all men do : nor is it credible, that two men were ever born with the same tastes, appetites, and discernments, or were ever equally affected by the same objects.

The setting up a standard for thinking and imagining, and the hating and harassing those who cannot bring their thoughts and imaginations to that standard, has an ugly resemblance of the old nonsense of chivalry, where the knight set up his mistress for the perfection and queen of beauty, and declared war against every mortal wight who did not own it, and the same war against all who made love to her : so whether you loved her not, or made love to her, he stood ready mounted, and armed, to thrust you through with his lance. Our visionary champions do as mad a thing, or rather more mad : they dress you up an imaginary Dulcinea, nay, often make a fulsome deformed piece of her, without symmetry or loveliness, and pronouncing her the most peerless and accomplished lady in the universe, pursue you with bitterness and cruelty, unless you embrace her as ardently as they do, and defile yourself with a monster. The champion in romance is the much more reasonable man of the two, and a mad man of the sounder sense. The difference between the Quixote and the Bigot, is, that the first mad man forces you on pain of death to admire without enjoying, and the second mad man forces you both to admire and enjoy on peril of double death, temporal and eternal. With this sort of Lunatic an impossibility is no objection ; and you must do the thing, whether you can or no : if you do not, he does God good service by persecuting and burning you. Without doubt there never was a man of common sense, or of any sense, at any time, who, were all his thoughts to be known, was not liable to be burnt by the laws and spirit of the inquisition, and by the spirit of every bigot of every profession under the sun.

The persecutor is always a mad man, even where the opinions for which he persecutes are true. The most of religious truths, especially the truths of revealed religion, however evident after examination, yet, where they are believed upon principle, depend upon a long train of reasoning, a series of facts, and collateral and subsequent testimonies, too intricate and sublime for the leisure and capacities of the bulk of mankind throughout the world. To settle therefore these truths in the hearts of men, the grace of God is the chief thing required : nor do I believe that ever any man became a real Christian, till grace made him so. We see that in the apostles' time grace always entered with conviction, and brought conviction, and none believed but those upon whom the Spirit fell : nor had the apostles any other help, after they had proposed their doctrine, but miracles and the Spirit. And they who have such helps need no other ; and no helps without the Spirit

will do. It is therefore the grace of God that changes the carnal disposition of the soul, and makes men Christians ; and it is most absurd and barbarous, to hurt or to hate those who want that which God only can give. Where he does not give it, all the arts and power of men to propagate Christianity avail nothing. Nor did it ever proceed from the grace of God, that any man hurt or hated another. And let him who is persecuted be as bad as he will, they that persecute him are worse, by putting in practice that pravity of spirit, of which they do but accuse him.

Persecution can promote nothing, but either utter destruction, or hypocrisy and servitude, which are direct contradictions to the peaceable, free and sincere spirit of Christianity. No Christian can bear any other yoke in the matter of religion than the yoke of Christ, who can alone *work in him to will, and to do*, and requires no more of any of his subjects than sincerity and a good conscience. These are graces which no human tribunal can confer, or judge, and are therefore subject to the tribunal of Christ only. They are things about which no testimony can be given ; they lie out of sight ; and what is invisible, is exempted from all human cognizance. To endeavour therefore to subject the soul to any human judgment, is a monstrous iniquity, and must eternally have most wicked consequences, as it tempts men to deceit and insincerity, destroys natural honesty, and lays baits for lying and perjuries.

The terror of the Inquisition makes multitudes of families, who are real Jews, false and professed Christians. In being Jews they are only mistaken ; but in professing Christianity, without believing it, they are great sinners and hypocrites ; though others, those impious men, those nominal Christians, or rather those reproaches to Christianity, who frighten the Jews into this hypocrisy, are more flagitious sinners than they. Scandalous and execrable is that unity which is the violent effect of rage and fire on one hand, and of ungodly dissimulation on the other. Every man must abhor that religion, and those men, who hold him under fears, hardships, and shackles, and restrain him from a candid profession of that faith, which, however false or ridiculous, he thinks the best and most acceptable to God. It is tempting and terrifying men into falsehood and impiety, and making them knaves and deceivers in the most tender and the most sacred instances. No man who tempts and frightens another man to be a dissembler and a knave, can himself be an honest man. A man who is honest, would have all men honest ; and none but a hypocrite in religion, can take methods to make men religious hypocrites, as all men must be, who conform and submit to any religion, even the best and the truest, without conviction, which is never wrought by force, nor by fear, but is the pure effect of persuasion, or the pure gift of God. Is bitterness and barbarity persuasion ? And what man's person, name, or property is hurt by the grace of God ? The ways of force and fury are therefore irreconcilable enemies to grace and to sense. They are enemies to religion, which delights in meekness and sincerity, and to human society, which subsists by peace, mutual forbearance, and moral honesty.

NUMBER 58.

A Dialogue between Monsieur Jurieu and a Burgomaster of Rotterdam.

Monsieur Jurieu, the famous French minister, after a long and intimate friendship with the great Mr. Bayle, fell into as outrageous a hatred against him. That divine was a man of great vanity, and violent passion, and could not bear the eminent and growing reputation of Mons. Bayle. He therefore began to fall upon some of Mr. Bayle's principles, and *Jure Theologorum*, attacked his orthodoxy. Mr. Bayle defended himself; his answer was strong and lively; Mr. Jurieu was visibly defeated, and enraged at his defeat. He did upon this occasion a very scandalous and very shameful thing, but very usual with zealous divines, when truth and laymen are too hard for them, or even when they are affronted one with another. He appealed for revenge to the civil power, and presented an angry and scolding petition to the magistrates of Rotterdam to silence Mr. Bayle. Upon this subject I have formed the following dialogue between Mr. Jurieu and a Burgomaster of that city.

Jurieu. You are sensible, sir, how Mr. Bayle has exposed me in his late book: I have here drawn up a request to the magistracy to silence him from writing, and in the mean time I will answer him. I beg, sir, you will countenance this my petition.

Burgomaster. I wish, Mr. Jurieu, that you would command me to serve you in any reasonable thing. Sure you will not desire me to help to tie Mr. Bayle's hands till you give him the strapado.

Jur. Sir, his hands ought to be tied: he is an advocate for atheism.

Burg. Convince me of that, and I shall think worse of him than I do at present.

Jur. Have you never read his letters upon the comet?

Burg. Yes, and value them; and have heard you an hundred times commend them.

Jur. I did not then see the venom of them.

Burg. How could it so long escape the penetration of Mr. Jurieu?

Jur. I was weak enough then to have an esteem for the author.

Burg. I hope you had a greater for religion.

Jur. I believed him a religious man.

Burg. And were angry with him before you saw any irreligion in him.

Jur. I own that my friendship made me partial.

Burg. And is not anger as apt as friendship to make men partial? Passion is an ill guide; and if it give new lights, they are too generally false lights.

Jur. Not passion, but God has given me new lights.

Burg. What! has God told you that Mr. Bayle is an atheist?

Jur. No; his book tells me so.

Burg. But you used to have very different thoughts of that book.

Jur. I have owned it: but God has given me wisdom to see my mistake.

Burg. So then you have discovered Mr. Bayle's atheism by revelation. And to deal ingenuously with you, Mr. Jurieu, I shall never make the same discovery till I have the same revelation.

Jur. Sir, you make yourself merry with revelation.

Burg. No, I don't; I only suspect that this thirst of vengeance does not come from revelation. Stick to your first text. Say that Mr. Bayle has exposed you; and therefore he is an atheist, and all his works are atheistical. Is there not something very criminal too, and offensive, in his great fame and reputation?

Jur. Permit me, sir, to say, that I envy him not for his works and his character, by which I suffer no eclipse. I am only sorry, upon the score of religion, that so ill a man should have so many admirers, and that yourself should be one of them.

Burg. I am one; I admire him, as he is a great genius; and I reverence him as one of the best men that I ever knew, and the most free from pride and passion.

Jur. He deceives you: he is a calm bitter enemy to Jesus Christ.

Burg. I doubt, sir, that your intemperate resentment deceives you: I wish that the retained advocates for Jesus Christ had less bitterness, or at least would withhold the fierceness of their Christian zeal from breaking out against the best Christians. What other article of the Christian faith has Mr. Bayle violated, besides that of daring to thwart the opinion of the Reverend Mr. Jurieu?

Jur. You astonish me, sir: has he not written an apology for atheism? an impious elaborate apology?

Burg. No, I know that he has not: he has too much good sense to be an atheist, and too much virtue to like atheism. He has, if you please, proved unanswerably, that a sensible atheist, governed by the laws of nature, and by the maxims and convenience of ease, is a better member of society than a mad and mischievous enthusiast, who plagues, persecutes, robs and kills his fellow creatures, in obedience to the precepts of a false religion. A proposition as certain and evident as that good is better than evil.

Jur. This discourse penetrates me with grief. No atheist can be good.

Burg. Have I said that he is? But thus you run away with things. I only affirm, that worse is not so good as better. Mr. Bayle has said no more; and is not therefore an atheist.

Jur. Sir, do but comply, you and your brethren, with my petition for silencing him, and I undertake to prove him one.

Burg. This is putting the proof upon us. You would have us treat him as an atheist, and will perhaps fetch your first and best argument from that treatment, to prove him an atheist: I know your warm temper, and dare say that this argument of Mr. Bayle's atheism would soon be published all over Europe, and be made to justify the worst things that your zeal and resentment could say of him.

Jur. Nothing too bad can be said of an atheist, nor done to him.

Burg. I never saw an atheist: but if we were to punish every man whom the angry enthusiasts call so, we must take them for our magis-

trates, and become only their inquisitors. A fine employment for magistrates, to exercise the whip and the sword for the clergy.

Jur. Ought not the magistrate to employ the sword for the defence of religion?

Burg. Yes, when religion is attacked by the sword.

Jur. Is there no remedy for speaking and writing against religion?

Burg. Yes, that of speaking and writing; and for this purpose are the clergy appointed and maintained. These are the only arms which the gospel and common sense give you.

Jur. Sir, I must beg your pardon: preaching and writing have no efficacy upon hardened and reprobate hearts. Where reproof is ineffectual, we must have recourse to severity and human terrors.

Burg. Human terrors may indeed bring men under the power of the clergy; and that is the only use the clergy do or can make of them. But it is a contradiction, to say that ever human terrors made a Christian: the grace of God can only do that. Now, will you say that fury and dungeons teach men Christianity; or that the grace of God is to be whipped or tortured into a man?

Jur. No; but they may be the means of humbling audacious sinners, and of begetting in them a sense of religion and submission.

Burg. That word *submission* has a shrewd meaning. But as to religion, if that is to be propagated by such means, there is little or no use of a clergy, but only of prisons, lictors, torturers, and executioners. And a troop of dragoons may do as well, or better, than a troop of ministers, when their admonitions are ineffectual.

Jur. I mean no such thing.

Burg. What then do you mean?

Jur. Only that you should restrain notorious gainsayers, and punish blasphemers.

Burg. That is, every man who gainsays and blasphemes your opinions.

Jur. True, if you mean my orthodox opinions.

Burg. That is the same thing. Every man thinks his opinions orthodox. Now in asking for this restraint and punishment, do you consider the consequences of what you ask? You really ask for an inquisition.

Jur. You grievously mistake me, Sir: I abhor the inquisition.

Burg. The Popish inquisition you do; but do you disclaim an inquisition of your own, or an inquisition in behalf of your religion?

Jur. You may perceive, Sir, I only seek to have restraint laid upon Mr. Bayle.

Burg. Suppose that restraint will not do: What must be done next?

Jur. Your own polity will tell you that. You must punish him—he disobeys the magistrate.

Burg. This is very casuistical; but let us see the end of it. Suppose that this punishment proves still too weak, and he still goes on?

Jur. Your government affords you a remedy.

Burg. Yes, we can put him to death. So that here is a restraint, punishment, and death, for religion, or for a question about religion. What is an inquisition, if this be not?

Jur. There will be no occasion of going so far.

Burg. But you say we must go so far, if there be occasion ; and we actually see that there is almost always occasion. No severity but the last severity will do in these cases. The very beginning implies the extremity ; so that whoever calls for any punishment in matters of religion and speculation, calls for the highest punishment ; and Mr. Jurieu, a Protestant divine, who has fled from the persecution in France, where no religion but the Popish is tolerated, and has taken sanctuary in Holland, where all religions are tolerated, calls upon the Dutch magistrates for persecution against a brother refugee, and a professed Calvinist, after having for many years, and by many books, reproached the French government in the bitterest terms, for persecuting the Calvinists. How will you reconcile this contradiction in your conduct ?

Jur. Easily, by maintaining that the Popish religion is a false religion, and ours the true.

Burg. The Papists make the same compliment to themselves, and the same charge against you. I am a Protestant, and I protest against persecution, as well as against other parts of Popery. I think that every religion which persecutes, is a false religion ; or rather, that every persecutor is a Papist ; and that every hardship or restraint for religious notions, is persecution.

Jur. You carry this reasoning very far. I hope you will allow the Christian religion to take care of itself.

Burg. Yes, by all means that are Christian : but you may as easily unite the spirit of Christianity to the spirit of Paganism, as preserve Christianity by the fierce and wicked ways that were taken to preserve Paganism. Neither Christ, nor his apostles, ever applied to the magistrate to fall upon unbelievers with the civil sword, nor even to stop their mouths.

Jur. They needed not ; they had miracles to support them ; and they would not apply to unbelieving magistrates.

Burg. And how came you, without miracles, to apply to us ? As you shew neither miracles nor infallibility, we know you liable to be mistaken ; as we are sure we should be if we practise severities for a religion which forbids them, and became mighty without them.

Jur. Religion had then no connection with the civil power.

Burg. Nor wanted it, nor claimed it.

Jur. The world, sir, is much altered since.

Burg. Not for the worse, I hope, having had the gospel so long in it, and after so great expense to the people for preaching it. I hope you do not find the present race of Christians more abandoned and untractable than the first Christians found the Pagans.

Jur. Sir, I am sorry to say we have not now such extraordinary assistances as they had then, nor such plentiful effusions of the divine Spirit.

Burg. Assistances of money and revenues you have had, I am sure, enough ; but the assistance of the sword, and the effusion of blood, will make no amends for the want of the assistance and effusion of the peaceable Spirit of God.

Jur. I am far from saying that it does : but I cannot help saying that the power of the magistrate has had a great share in extending Christianity ; and God has shewn that he approved the zeal of the first Christian emperors, by the success which he gave them.

NUMBER 59.

Dialogue between Mr. Jurieu, and a Burgomaster, (continued.)

Burg. THE persecuting Christian emperors had much such success against Paganism, as Lewis XIV. has had against Calvinism, and got it by the same wicked methods. Mahomet had greater success than either; and it is a particular article of the Mahometan religion, that God blesses every thing that succeeds.

Jur. No such argument can be used in behalf of a false religion.

Burg. Every whit as much, as in behalf of false and barbarous measures, taken to propagate the true. Every man thinks his own religion the true religion; and every religious successful mischief that every man does, has, according to your argument the divine approbation. So that here, out of the mouth of Mr. Jurieu, is a defence of all the pious barbarities and slaughters that ever were committed in the world.

Jur. Sir, I am against all barbarities.

Burg. Yes; when they fall upon yourself or your party; but when they are exercised for you against others, they are wholesome severities. If the Duke of Guise hanged a Hugonot, you cry it was persecution and barbarity; and so say I. But if Dr. Calvin burned Servetus, it was the just doom of a heretic; nay, it was God's judgment upon heresy; and just so argued the Duke of Guise. Now to me both the Doctor and the Duke were persecutors and barbarians in those instances. But thus sects butcher and burn one another, and practise and condemn the same thing.

Jur. Pray, sir, consider the consequences of this reasoning. You put the wolves upon the same foot with the lambs of Christ; as to the defence and security of their flocks.

Burg. Every persecutor is a wolf. Did you ever see a lamb devour a kid? Did you ever see a lamb armed with fangs and claws, and nourished with blood?

Jur. No. But I hope you, that are magistrates, ought to defend us against wolves.

Burg. Without all doubt. But do not you persuade us to mistake men for wolves, and friends for enemies?

Jur. No. But I maintain Mr. Bayle to be a wolf.

Burg. Of all men I should never take Mr. Bayle, the philosopher, for a beast of prey. Has he ever torn you, Mr. Jurieu, or threatened to eat you up?

Jur. This is raillery, and not reasoning. Sure you will allow that heretics and sceptics are wolves.

Bur. No, indeed won't I: I have known excellent men of both sorts. I will neither allow them to be wolves, nor suffer wolves to fall upon them.

Jur. Sir, you'll pardon me, if you argue thus, I cannot argue with you.

Burg. I believe you cannot ; you thought you had nothing to do but to point out your wolf ; nor I, but to knock him on the head.

Jur. I am sorry to see so great lukewarmness ; it forbodes no good to the church.

Burg. It forbodes no victims, no spiritual bonfires to the ecclesiastics ; whose fiery zeal, were it suffered to blaze out, would soon make fuel of the whole state, and reduce this opulent commonwealth to uniformity and a few miserable fisher towns. But the truth is, we are not lukewarm, we act upon a principle of Christianity, by tolerating all religions, and by not suffering any Christian to hurt another, or any other man for his religion.

Jur. Alas, sir, without an assistance more active, religion will languish.

Burg. That is your fault then ; you have our active assistance. Have you not pulpits, and temples, and opportunities, by the providence of the states, which maintains great numbers of ecclesiastics, at a great expense, to teach the people what the Bible teaches them ; to explain to them the plain commandments of God ; to open to them the inspired writings of the gospel in your own words ; and to baffle all who find any other meaning there than what you find.

Jur. But what if they pay no submission to our doctrine and discipline ?

Burg. No more they ought not, if they do not like your doctrine and discipline. Submission is paid to external things, and due only to the state. What title have you to any body's submission, any more than the church of France had to yours ? If every man be not to follow his own judgment in religion, then is religion blindness.

Jur. But what do you say to those who have no religion ?

Burg. Say ! I say, I wish that they had.

Jur. What ! will you take no method to reclaim them.

Burg. Yes, we give you money to talk to them.

Jur. And they won't mind us.

Burg. Then you must do as I do, pray for them.

Jur. This is a faint way of propagating the gospel.

Burg. I beg that you would name me any other.

Jur. Sir, give me leave to tell you, that three fourths of Europe would be Pagans at this day, had not the emperor Constantine, and his successors, employed their authority to abolish Paganism.

Burg. If the fact be so, I am ashamed to hear it ; and think that those emperors were very bad men, and great tyrants. They made hypocrites, and no Christians ; and these were much better men, when they were professed Pagans, as well as better subjects. All converts made by force, are made impostors and enemies. Many of those princes were of themselves evil and bloody men, and more so by the restless instigations of the clergy, who having departed from all Christian humility and meekness, converted preaching into domineering, and exhortation into violence and terrors ; employed penal laws and the imperial sword to confute antagonists, and to make proselytes ; and the emperor and his soldiers were the apostles of that time. Thus began Popery, and the strange heterogeneous tyranny of Rome ; and thus it continues. Better had it been for the Pagans, and better for mankind, if there never had been such converts.

Jur. I deny that the first emperors were Papists.

Burg. They were directed by priests, and founded Popery.

Jur. That was the abuse of their goodness.

Burg. No ; it was the natural and certain use of their folly and wickedness. And you cannot distinguish any persecution or any priestly domination any where from true Popery, but in the degrees of it ; and wherever it is not checked, it will certainly and eternally arrive, without stopping, to the highest degree of Popery.

Jur. Sir, can you possibly think me capable of a kind wish for Popery ?

Burg. No ; but you do just as the Popish priests do, call upon the magistrate for help and civil restraint, the first step to fire and faggot.

Jur. I am grieved you should think all sorts of clergy alike.

Burg. I do not think they are ; but I think they all would be, if the magistrate would let them. I never knew any but, where they were suffered, were endless informers and solicitors to the magistrate against dissenters, and men of different opinions. In which conduct there is something extremely absurd and bold. If the clergy direct the magistrate, then are the clergy verily and indeed the magistrate ; and if the magistrate must deal in religion, then is the magistrate the clergy.

Jur. To whom must the clergy apply in case of obstinate gain-sayers ?

Burg. To God and reason.

Jur. Do you think, sir, we can be satisfied with this answer ?

Burg. I do not think you can ; but I am sure you ought. 'To deal freely with you, most ecclesiastics are like women and children, and expect from all mankind to be humoured in every thing. Like women and children they grow sullen, peevish, and often outrageous when they are not humoured ; and like them they are terrified with dreams, shadows, and phantoms. I never yet knew a woman, or child, or a clergyman, but thought they had a right to every thing that they had a mind to, however pernicious or unreasonable.

Jur. I am sorry, sir, you should think what I ask of you pernicious or unreasonable.

Burg. I am sorry and ashamed you should think otherwise. You run away from persecution in your own country, and desire those who protect and maintain you here, to turn persecutors, against the genius of Christianity, and the fundamental maxims of our state. You have leisure, learning, and pay, to write and confute, and say what you please about religion. Why should not other men have the same liberty ? Are so many zealous and able champions, so many learned ecclesiastics, with so good a cause, afraid of a few mistaken laymen, contending weakly for error ? Did the apostles act thus, or complain thus ?

Jur. Alas, sir ! they had extraordinary powers to combat error withal : but the providence of God hath now in a great measure left his church to the protection of the Christian magistrate.

Burg. I thought that truth had been always sufficient to combat error ; and I hope providence has not left you destitute of the assistance of truth : and as to the magistrates protection, you may enjoy it to the full here. We allow every man to profess and defend his own religion ; and by this means truth has a full and a fair hearing : not

does truth desire more ; though craft and falsehood can never be sufficiently propped and barricaded. Thus our protection, like our charity, is Christian and universal. As to the narrow protection of one tribe, or side only, it is poor, enthusiastical, and scandalous : it is depreciating government into a party, and confining Christianity to a cabal.

Jur. But by this loose and unrestrained protection, error has equal countenance with truth.

Burg. How so, Mr. Jurieu ? If I set a giant to wrestle with a dwarf, and encourage him to use the dwarf, as he pleases, to throw him down, and crush him to pieces, has the giant any reason to complain ? If, on the contrary, I bind the dwarf hand and foot, and then set the giant upon him, I am sure the poor dwarf has reason to complain heavily, and the giant to be greatly ashamed. This is plainly the state of truth and error : truth will inevitably triumph if it has fair play. What reason have the clergy to be afraid ? Why need Mr. Jurieu complain ?



NUMBER 60.

Conclusion of the Dialogue between Mr. Jurieu and a Burgomaster.

Jur. You may call error a dwarf ; but you see how powerful it is in the world ; and therefore I complain.

Burg And plead for a method to make it still stronger. Why is truth impotent or unknown any where, but that it is almost every where brow-beaten, silenced, and shackled ?

Jur. I am so far from pleading for this, that I profess nothing but truth.

Burg. So say all men, the mistaken and the enlightened ; and as every man makes his own opinions, right or wrong, the measure of truth, all opinions but his are to be suppressed and restrained. This keeps the whole earth in darkness and misery, and supports errors by establishments and armies. Hence the Mahometans, hence the herd of Catholics, are as ignorant as the beasts of the field, and more unsociable and fierce in behalf of their gross stupidity. The common Lutherans of Sweden and Denmark are not much better, and the Greek church full as bad. If there be any sparks of truth in Turkey or Italy, it is hid in a few heads, and must never, upon pain of death and tortures, make any appearance or progress ; nor can it ever appear in its full force and glory, but where there is an universal toleration of all sects and sentiments. Where there is no toleration, there is no truth ; where toleration is limited, truth is lame ; and it rises and falls with toleration. The learning of the French clergy was owing to the French Hugonots ; the learning of the English clergy to the Roman catholics, and other dissenters ; and so *vice versa*. Learning in England makes a prodigious progress by the means of liberty ; it as visibly decays in

France for want of liberty. And in Holland, from the same cause, there are more learned men, learning, and libraries, than in all Asia, Africa, and America. Consider now, Mr. Jurieu, where, and from what causes, truth is to be met with.

Jur. Methinks you make an ill compliment to truth, by representing it as so much obliged, for its strength and enlargement, to the toleration of error.

Burg. The fact is universally true : but you take but one half of my reasoning. I contend for universal toleration of all opinions, true and false ; and then I am sure that truth will prevail over falsehood, nay, derive new advantages from it, since perpetual debate and enquiries will as certainly promote and illustrate truth, as weaken and expose error.

Jur. But do you not see, sir, how artful and designing men dress up falsehood every day with all the appearances of truth, and so deceive mankind ?

Burg. I see it plainly enough ; and I see other men every day stripping it of its borrowed ornaments, and restoring them to the right owner, and exposing the craft and designs of those champions of delusions.

Jur. But still they do great mischief ; and therefore were it not much better that truth alone should be encouraged and established, and error crushed and restrained ?

Burg. Would we not be happy, Mr. Jurieu, if we were not subject to sickness and folly, and could establish eternal wisdom and eternal health by a law ?

Jur. Yes, if it were possible ; but we can restrain error.

Burg. How ! Can you restrain the thoughts ?

Jur. By your help we can restrain them from going abroad.

Burg. Then we alone do it. And thus too we can prevent sickness, by putting men to death when they are well ; or cure them, by killing them when they are ill. Nor can we extirpate error from amongst men, but by extirpating men. Shew me the man that is free from error, when neither the prophets nor apostles were free from it ; when priests and teachers of all kinds are generally, of all men, the most subject to it, and the greatest and warmest promoters of it ; and when so able a Divine as Mr. Jurieu has been so egregiously mistaken and disappointed in his prophecies taken from the revelations.

Jur. There are reasons in the councils of God, why these prophecies have not been fulfilled.

Burg. That is, however, a confession that you were not in his councils ; and shews that men may be strongly persuaded that they are in his councils, when they are not ; and is a good reason for distrusting such as pretend to it.

Jur. The wickedness of men, as well as their repentance, may prevent the accomplishment of prophecy.

Burg. That was the poor excuse which St. Bernard made for himself, when by his enthusiastic declamations, and positive prophecies, he had sent an army of Christians on a fool's errand, to be knocked on the head by the Saracens. Every prophecy not fulfilled is false prophecy.

Jur. I thought that I was not mistaken in what I foretold from the revelations ; and my mistake was not voluntary, nor is it heterodox or heretical.

Burg. So will every man say of his opinion and mistakes, and therefore all men ought to be indulged in them ; though, if ever any man's opinions and errors deserved severe animadversion, yours do, since those who believed your predictions (as enthusiasm is infinitely credulous) might have been hurried and misled by them into insurrections, invasions, and civil wars. It is well for you that your own severe maxims are not turned upon you, and that you enjoy the shelter and connivance of this free state, which yet by these maxims you would utterly destroy. You know what a just and severe storm you have raised against you and your party in France, and what advantages you have given to Catholics to treat you as an impostor, and an incendiary. I wonder that this has not humbled you, and taught you some of that moderation towards others, which is so necessary to yourself. You have severely felt the heavy effects of heat, and vehemence, and positiveness, and yet have not learned more mildness and charity, nor to trust to reason alone in disputing, though all Europe has seen how far you are from infallibility.

Jur. I have not been guilty of atheism, nor of heresy ; and I never set up for infallibility.

Burg. I do not see but your opinions are as chargeable with atheism as any of Mr. Bayle's ; and yet you would be terribly enraged at such a charge. Either cease to judge others, or suffer others to judge as well as you. You own you are not infallible ; and yet no pope was ever more positive and magisterial in his decrees, than you are in your censures. As to heresy, it is a foolish word, to signify any opinion that angers hot churchmen ; who are almost universally heretics to one another, and yet are so distracted as to set up a model for the human mind to think by. They may as well pretend to paint, or to shave the head, which has certainly a different way of acting in every mortal man, as all men have different organs and imaginations. The persuading all men to think alike, is as rational as to exhort them all to dream alike. What would you think, Mr. Jurieu, of a mission to persuade the negroes to change their erroneous black complexion, and become orthodox and white ?

Jur. Do I propose any thing like that ?

Burg. What then do you propose ?

Jur. Only an agreement in a system of faith.

Burg. Who are they that thus agree in systems of faith ; that is to say, in a certain adjusted size of thinking ?

Jur. We the Calvinists do.

Burg. The Papists boast as much, or more of themselves : that is, every set of ecclesiastics agree to the sound of certain articles, and then fall out in explaining them.

Jur. I am sorry it should sometimes happen so.

Burg. It always happens so, where tyranny does not efface or abolish Christianity, and set up an inquisition, and consequently ignorance or hypocrisy. Besides, Mr. Bayle is a strict Calvinist.

Jur. He professes to be so ; but he is not sincere.

Burg. Who made you a judge of hearts ? you have disowned infallibility.

Jur. I judge him by the word of God, and by his own works.

Burg. I judge the same way ; and yet can find no fault in him. I freely own that I am of all his religious opinions. What now think you of me, Mr. Jurieu ? don't you think that I deserve to be punished as well as he ? suppose the whole magistracy be in the same sentiments with me, are we not liable to great censure, and deserving of great punishment ? what says your principle to this ?

Jur. I should be afflicted for so sorrowful a thing : but I don't pretend to punish the magistrate.

Burg. Why would you then punish Mr. Bayle ?

Jur. For the glory of God.

Burg. It is now plain how high that principle would carry you, if the magistrate was not higher than you. But be assured, that for the glory of God we will take care both of ourselves and Mr. Bayle, and preserve both magistrate and people from this strange zeal of stigmatizing and punishing for the glory of God.

Jur. I hope, sir, you will make some difference between good men and the worst of men.

Burg. Certainly. Every man is a good man who is an honest man, and a quiet subject : we will value him much more than a proud and unquiet man whatever fine names he may assume.

Jur. Atheists can never be good subjects.

Burg. Most that the clergy call so are the best subjects, as well as the ablest men. No man who owns the being of a God, is an atheist ; and I never knew any man that denied his being : and till any man does, it is false, wicked, and barbarous, to call him an atheist. As to the idea of God, I believe all men differ about it, because I am sure no man can ascertain it.

Jur. Is there no preference to be given to the Christian faith and doctrines ?

Burg. Yes, the preference of truth ; which will defend them. Nor has the blessed and beneficent author of them given them any other preference, or external advantages. And to say that they want any other, is to call the truth of Christianity in doubt, which made its way without any other. It is therefore mistrusting the power and veracity of Christianity, to restrain for its sake any set of opinions whatsoever. Where liberty of conscience and of opinion is not fully maintained, Christianity is not maintained, but only one faction of Christians, falsely so called, against all the rest, and against the spirit and first principles of Christianity. This state was once weak enough to enter into the subtleties, contentions, and chimeras of divines, and near being overturned by a ridiculous attempt to settle guesses and orthodoxy. A synod of doctors at Dort, by the mere dint of words and dreams, were like to have put an end to the high and mighty states of Holland and Friezeland. We have since learned more wit, than to sacrifice the peace of our government, or any man's peace, to the passion or maggots of the clergy. We protect them all against one another, and all men against them. As to their own subtle disputes and inventions, we meddle not with them, if they meddle not with us. They have good pay, and a clear stage ; and it is not for their credit, if they de-

re more. If any man be a bad subject, and break our laws, we now how to deal with him without the assistance of the clergy : and if any man be a bad believer, it is their business to convince him. But whoever would convince by stripes and terror, proclaims open war against Christianity and common sense, against the peace of society, and the happiness of mankind. Persecution, for any opinion whatever, justifies persecution for every opinion in the world ; and every persecutor is liable to be persecuted, upon his own principles, by every man upon earth of a different opinion, and more strength. What ismal butcheries would such a cruel spirit raise !

I hope you will forgive me, Mr. Jurieu, for using you thus, with the freedom of a Christian and a Dutchman. I have a great kindness for you, but a greater for the state : we cannot violate our best maxims because you are angry at Mr. Bayle.

Jur. I shall beg leave, for all this, to present my petition : if it has no effect, I can only appeal to God.

Burg. With all my heart : but do not appeal to him in anger.

NUMBER 61.

Force and Fraud, how opposite to the Spirit of Religion. The very different Effects of religious Liberty and false Zeal.

TRUE religion has every advantage over the false, except force and fraud ; and these are the only advantages which a false religion has over the true. The Holy Ghost, which always accompanies the true religion, and every man that has it, is not to be bought, nor bribed, or entertained by money ; not to be propagated by artifice, or falsehood, or human policy, nor to be infused by power, nor helped by the sword. He is detached from every secular interest, and has no use for arts nor authority. He comes freely to those that ask him, and sometimes to those who do not ask ; and is guided only by his benevolence and good pleasure. He is omnipotent, and can never be influenced by the inventions of men, nor be made obedient to arts or force, which can only serve to provoke and banish him, and to exalt worldly pride in his room. The utmost length that human power can go in religion, without hurting it, is to entertain some men to persuade others to virtuous actions, and to pray for the Spirit, and to pray with them. Beyond this, which is very commendable, human power cannot go, and is innocent.

People have been generally misled in their idea of religion, by tacking to it the idea of a hierarchy, which they call church government, but which is in truth only the government of the state about things appertaining to the church. But the true idea of religion is confined to the operations of the Spirit of God upon the heart of man, and to the effects which those operations produce. Religion therefore is the ef-

fect of the Spirit, which can have no alliance with secular interest, which too often interferes with the Spirit and quenches it. This shews that the ecclesiastical cause, and the cause of religion, are not always identical, but ought to be distinguished. The piety of a bishop is not always as large as his diocese, nor the good which he does equal to the advantages which he receives : and there has been, and may be, religion in the world, where there are no ecclesiastical officers. It would be impious to say the contrary.

Charity and sincerity are the characteristics of the true religion ; and it disowns bitterness, dissimulation, and human arms, which are the weapons and defence of a false religion, which must deceive where it cannot persuade, and force where it cannot deceive ; and to use these weapons in behalf of the true, is to renounce it, and bring it under the suspicion of falsehood. If a man tell me that his religion is the best and most merciful religion in the world, and yet treat me with ill nature and severity for not being of his religion, I shall believe that either his religion is false and ill natured, or that he is a disbeliever or an ill judge of his own religion. The Christian religion is so absolutely divested of all fierceness and gall, that it commands us to love our enemies, that is, men of all religions, or of none. Hence Origen, by a good natured mistake (if it were one) believed that even the devils and the damned would at last be saved. This merciful opinion, however groundless, has piety and sense in it, compared to the detestable folly and impiety of pronouncing any man damned, however irreligious.

Men that have no religion, or a false one, are entitled to our pity and exhortation. This is the voice of religion and good nature : for from reason and experience we know, that sourness and asperity only serve to harden and embitter them. While they are in the wrong, they are unhappy ; and it is avowed cruelty to add, by ill usage, one misfortune to another, and to shew our own want of humanity, for their want of grace. It is like using a man ill for an unfortunate face and hard features. Opinions are the features of the soul ; and let them be ever so ridiculous or deformed, all men like their own best : and whilst they like them, they neither will nor can part with them ; and when they cease to like them, they will cease to retain them.

No man desires to be mistaken ; and it is the pride and interest of every man to have the best lights and the largest understanding. It is a contradiction to say, that in point of opinion any man can sin against light : his opinion is the best light that he has, and he will inevitably change it upon better light. If the avenues to his understanding be so obstructed by prejudice, custom, and bigotry, that no new illumination can find passage, a case which is very common, this also is a misfortune, but not a fault : for he certainly would embrace the best, if he thought it best. There is no more sin in this than in a diseased and depraved appetite, which cannot relish wholesome food.

The mind is more subject to be depraved than the appetite ; and there are few, if any, minds in the world but what are more or less depraved ; and but for that depravity, we should be in a state of perfection. But the most depraved of all, are they who quarrel with one another, because their souls are not marked with the same stamp and impressions, which are as various as men ; opinions, imaginations, and

errors, being infinite. It depends upon no man's choice how he shall be first taught, nor what ideas he shall first draw in : this depends upon parents, nurses, tutors, and external objects and accidents. Nor is it in his power afterwards to get rid of these first and fortuitous impressions : chiefly, because while they please him, he cannot desire it ; and we see they generally please. Men for the most part carry the fruits and force of their earliest education along with them to their graves. We see men as fond of the foolishbest opinions, as of the truest. Hence Mahometans continue Mahometans, Pagans continue Pagans ; and both hate our religion, as much as we pity and condemn theirs.

Indeed men are generally zealous for their faith, in proportion to its absurdity ; and the more ridiculous the opinion, the more fierce the zeal of its votaries in its defence. The Popish dreams of transubstantiation and the infallibility of a man, are I think some of their highest and boldest nonsense, but such as they have taken the most ardent pains to propagate and defend, and burnt most people for denying. And as it is true, that religious madmen are ever eager to make proselytes to their phrensies, it is equally true, that they are much less solicitous about the interests of virtue, than about the belief and increase of these phrensies. We have it from our Saviour's authority, that the Pharisees compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and by doing it, made him ten-fold more a child of the devil than he was before. The Turks have the same zeal to bring men from Christianity to the savage stupidity of Mahometanism. The Popish nurseries of drones, enthusiasts, and impostors, particularly the jesuits, the blackest incendiaries and immoralists of all, ramble in clusters about all the corners of the earth on the same errand, and stick at no means nor frauds to cheat men out of common sense, charity, and humanity, to make way for Popery, which is a complication of all the absurdities, roguesries, and errors, that ever appeared amongst men, or that the craft, folly, and malice of men are capable of.

In the most northern nations, nations where men live amongst bears and forests, their zeal and charity are as unhospitable as their climate, as savage as their way of life. Men are every where uncharitable in proportion to their ignorance, and ignorant in proportion to their bigotry, which lessens or ceases according to the measure of their understandings ; but thrives by the absence of politeness, civility, and knowledge. Upon the skirts of a mountain, and in small villages, you find more of it than in towns, in towns more than in cities, in small cities more than in great. A general commerce with the world, and a thorough acquaintance with men, quite destroy it. Every thing that is good for mankind, is bad for bigotry, as bigotry is an enemy to every thing that promotes the welfare of mankind ; and it is utterly impossible for any great nation to subsist in greatness, where bigotry is armed or let loose.

We feel and behold here in England the glorious and diffusive effects of a general toleration. It has multiplied our people and manufactures, and consequently increased prodigiously our strength and riches. It has invited multitudes of foreigners hither with all their arts and money. It has encouraged industry at home, by leaving to all men an equal enjoyment of their conscience and property, without being exposed, as formerly, to the rapine and villainous arts of informers, without being harass-

sed for opinions and their way of worship, without being insulted by foolish and zealous drunken justices, without being summoned and terrified before merciless courts, for a harmless pious meeting in a barn, and without the danger of being driven out of their country, or undone in it for a conscientious disobedience to the inventions and grimaces of hot-headed monks.

Had the arts and cruelties of Laud gone on, as they drove many of the best English subjects to people the wild woods of America, where they found tygers and rattlesnakes less destructive enemies than his grace ; these arts and cruelties of his would have ended in dispeopling England, or reduced this great nation to a number and condition, not deserving the name of a people, even to a herd of slaves, starving and trembling under the iron rod of the new lords of the soil, their levitical landlords. England must have been in the same condition, to which such men and such measures reduce every country under the sun where they bear sway ; a state of lust and insolence on one side, and of fear and famine on the other. And I defy such men, with all their sophistry and distinctions, to reconcile the putting any number of people under discouragements and distresses for any sort of religious worship and opinions, to the peace and happiness of society. How would they accommodate their darling uniformity to London or Amsterdam, without dispeopling or impoverishing those great cities, where no sort of men are disturbed for their religion ? Societies must thrive apace, where they are subject to such directors as would set up a coat, or a ceremony, in balance against the glory, liberty, and prosperity of mankind !

I wish I could help to drive this spirit of uncharitableness out of the world, wherein it has committed such wide and affecting ravages ; a spirit which is against all common sense and human compassion ; a spirit which is at open war with the very letter and genius of the gospel of Christ, scandalous and baneful to the whole race of men, and always highest amongst the worst. Good men and wise men are strangers to it, and abhor it.

NUMBER 62.

Power and Imposition in Matters of Religion, tend rather to abolish Religion, than to improve it. The Light of Nature, and the Practice of Heathens, furnish Reproof to Persecuting Christians.

It is as true as it is amazing and melancholy, that the abuse of the true religion has done a thousand times more mischief in the world, created more wars, hatred, and havoc amongst men, shed more of their blood, and carried human miseries, ignorance, and idolatry higher, than all the madness and variety of the old idolatrous religions of the Gentiles ever did before it. The reason of this sad difference, so shame-

ful to Christians, is the uncharitable and imposing spirit of their ignorant or designing leaders : a spirit as unknown to the civilized Pagans, as it is opposite to Christianity.

These Pagans worshipped an endless tribe of deities : and though their principal gods and goddesses had great emulation and many quarrels among themselves, their adorers agreed well enough in worshipping them all, or differed without quarrelling. The light of nature taught them that something was eternal, and the first cause of themselves, and of all that they saw ; and this cause they called God. And because they thought that the conducting of nature in its several great divisions of sea, earth, and æther, was too much for one, they allotted each division to a different deity, and made a numerous subdivision of these deities for smaller purposes. Besides, finding or fancying themselves superior in comeliness and capacity to all other creatures, they generally gave the gods human shapes and passions. Thus, having never seen God, nor heard from him, they judged of him by guess, and worshipped him by humour, every man following his own ; nor had they then any other rule.

No man can say, that in this worship, and in those conjectures, every man did not act according to the best of his own knowledge, or that his intention was not upright. It was a thing in which he himself was chiefly concerned ; and it behoved him to endeavour to be in the right. This endeavour is, without divine help, all that any man can do, and all that ought to be expected from any man. The Pagans could only see God in his works, and from thence conclude him a great and glorious being ; but where he was, or what he was, they could not know. It was a discovery which the light of nature could not make. Nor has revelation made it. Revelation only tells us what is acceptable to him. And this we can conceive ; but himself we can never conceive, nor define, no more than we can his motives and manner of acting. It is therefore as absurd in Christians to quarrel with one another about their different weak and imperfect notions of God, as it would have been in Pagans to have quarrelled about their different false ideas of God.

Amongst the Pagans there was an infinity of religious opinions, and yet, for the most part, perfect peace : all the superstitions and nonsense of Paganism did scarce afford sufficient tumults and fightings to fill one moderate ecclesiastical history. The wise Greeks and Romans, who understood so well the laws of nature and society, did not suffer the precepts of their religion, nor the idle tales and dreams of enthusiasts, to interfere with the laws of reason and humanity, much less to extinguish them. They enquired not after the whims and superstitions of their countrymen, any further than to improve their superstition to the good of their state. They knew that whether their people worshipped Jupiter, Bacchus, or Minerva, or whatever they thought of them, they were never the better nor the worse subjects ; and they had the good sense never to engage the state in the affairs of religion, any farther than religion directly concerned the state ; and never to meddle with religious notions and fashions, which meddle not with the government.

The College of Augurs at Rome, which consisted of their great men and magistrates, men who were acquainted with human nature, and its many weaknesses and superstitions, with the innocence of unmolested

error, and with the just extent and use of power, never founded tables of belief, nor oppressed the people with a yoke of imaginations, or of jarring propositions to be believed upon penalties, though they could not be understood. To this human and tolerating temper in the Romans it was owing, that of all the turns, contentions, and revolutions which happened in that state, not one, that I remember, was occasioned by religion, though they had gods without number, and almost as many religions as men. Nor do different religions ever any harm to any state, where the state does not weakly and unnaturally force all men into one religion. Men who are suffered to enjoy their religion, will seek no force to defend it : but where religious impositions are practised, religious wars naturally ensue, and men will rather fight than be forced.

In a war between two states of Greece, one of them robbed the temple of Delphos, in the territories of the other. Hence it was called the sacred war. But it was, as to its ends and motives, a war for power and property, and had nothing to do with one religion more than another, on either side. The Greeks and Romans were so far from hurting any man for his religion, provided he let them alone with theirs, that their great quarrel to the Christian religion, at first, seems to have been, that it was destructive of theirs, and degraded all their gods.

They had afterwards too much ground given them for new prejudices against it, by the abominable spirit and behaviour of the Christian clergy ; by their unbounded pride and thirst of riches, power, and revenge ; by their restless quarrels, and implacable tyranny ; by their dissimulation and frauds ; by their wicked, absurd, and selfish doctrines ; by their scandalous and tumultuous synods, and the wicked purposes and results of those synods ; by their base flatteries to some princes, and the vile arts which they used to engage those princes to shed blood in their behalf and quarrel ; by their factions, rebellions, and insulting deportment to other princes for their wisdom and humanity ; in short, by a horrid and universal depravation of manners, and a monstrous apostacy from the soul and letter of that humble, meek, and charitable religion, which, as a black aggravation of all their usurpations, and incredible excesses, they still professed, and impiously urged as their warrant for such enormous iniquities.

I mention these things in the bitterness of my soul, and without any exaggeration. They are owned and lamented by the best Christian writers, ancient and modern ; and the ecclesiastical histories, voluminous as they are, have little else to fill them but the frauds and fury of those men. As to those general councils, particularly, which are revered only for want of being known, they were composed of men so utterly void of all sincerity, holiness, peace, and probity, that it will be hard to find in any country upon earth, any assembly of men met together upon any occasion, so bent upon mischief and strife, or by whom so much was begun and promoted. The bold impositions and furious contentions begun by them are not yet ended : God knows whether they will ever end. They took upon them to coin faith for others, and tacked dreadful penalties and denunciations, to injunctions of their own devising ; as if the plain and easy truths of Christianity, as delivered by such only as could deliver them, the holy disinterested men who first heard them, and saw them, were not plain

enough, or rather too plain. These imposers, after some hundred years, took upon them to new fashion Christianity according to their own strange and selfish inventions, and disguised it with such a dress, that it was not to be known. What an inexhaustible source this has proved of wars and outrage, of domination and servitude, and of all human woes, wickedness, and sorrows, I leave the historians of all ages and countries to tell. By it millions have fallen ; and by it Mahometanism seems to have been raised, and justified by example, in exercising the sword over the soul, and laying the world waste.

How innocent, I had almost said, how pious, were the ancient sober heathens. in comparison with these false Christians, those destroyers of Christianity, and pests of human society ! The only reason why the Pagan religion, with all its follies, frauds, and superstitions, did so little harm (how little in comparison !) was, that it imposed nothing upon the consciences of men, and opinions were not unnaturally made subject to power. They believed naturally a supreme power, and as naturally worshipped it ; in which they all freely followed their own fancies. The public forms, where they were established, were established by consent, and in compliance with the various or unanimous humours of the people ; and every one took as much of them as he liked, and was in practice and opinion, a Stoic, an Epicurean, a Pyrrhonist, just as he thought fit. His practice was as free as his speculations ; so free, that the gods of Greece were often ridiculed and severely rallied upon the Grecian stage ; and their oracles were perfect noses of wax to every prince, or state, that had either power to frighten the priests, or money to bribe them. If Socrates was put to death by the Athenians for nobler notions of the Deity than the vulgar entertained, it was done, for the honour of persecution, as all such things are done, by a faction ; and for the honour of the Athenians, they repented severely their rash zeal, and practised it no more.

But the Christian religion, by how much it is more excellent than all other religions, by so much it has been more abused : it has had the ill luck to fall, in most places and times, into the hands of such directors, as have profanely trampled upon all its gentle precepts, and, in room of the meek Christian spirit, have introduced a spirit of ferocity and domineering ; such directors as have turned prayer and persuasion into imposing and fury, and such as, setting up for governing conscience, which is, and can be subject to God only, have grasped temporal dominion and the sword, which can have no other power over the soul but to terrify and afflict it, to darken it with ignorance, and taint it with hypocrisy.

This power they have called, by a foolish and deceitful phrase, spiritual power, which is the most fraudulent and furious of all the schemes and engines of human craft and policy, and comprehends them all, as may be seen by the rage, rapine, and treachery with which it is exerted in the territories of Popery. It is a power heterogeneous to society, poisonous to the gospel of Christ, forbid by him, and barbarous to men. It is indeed pure secular tyranny, heightened by ghostly arts and cruelty, and a further improvement of human malice and misery. Dominion over conscience is absolute nonsense, and the word big with fraud. Men can only be subject to dominion in their bodies and properties. That which no power can reach, can never

be the object of power. The governing of opinions is therefore impossible, and only a pretence for the governing of men in their persons and purses. Thus far only men can be subject to men ; every thing beyond this is delusion, phrenzy, and contradiction. Thoughts and opinions can neither be bound, whipped, nor burnt.

NUMBER 63.

The consuming Nature of Persecution. Persecutors generally religious Madmen. Their egregious want of Shame, and utter unfitness to make Converts.

THE practice of some of the ancient Heathens, who offered human sacrifice, and butchered men to please their Gods, was a dreadful barbarity, not capable of aggravation by words. Yet this barbarity had mercy and mitigation in it, compared to the more unrestrained and merciless genius of those Pagan Christians, who, from a principle of religion, or from any principle, avow and promote the killing, punishing, and distressing of men for the free sentiments of their souls, and for their notions of God and religion.

The ancient human sacrificers confined themselves to a stated number : one or a few generally sufficed : and this brutish devotion was either extraordinary, by the direction of some lying oracle, or repeated at large intervals. But the Christian sacrificers of men have rarely known such moderation, rarely set such bounds to their devout thirst of human blood : all who did not say with them, and dream with them, and practise their jargon and postures, were proper victims. Hence myriads have been butchered to assuage their holy fury, and the blood of nations let out, has not been enough to assuage it. Hence the Irish massacre, a human sacrifice to Popery of some hundred thousands : hence the like sacrifice of thirty thousand at Paris ; and of three times as many all over France at the same time : hence the long continued murder of the Waldenses and Albigenses, the destruction and expulsion of the Moors in Spain, and of the Hugonots in France : hence the dreadful ravages committed by the inquisitors, who act so much like devils, that they can scarce be thought men : hence all the mad and cruel wars for religion ; and hence the oppressions, imprisonments, and executions any where upon any religious account.

The Mahometan faquirs in the Indies are such distracted and bloody villains for their religion, which indeed was founded in phrenzy and blood, that when they return from their pious pilgrimage to Mecca, drunk with devotion, and flaming with zeal, many of them run through the streets, or into the first crowd they meet withal, stabbing and killing with a poisoned dagger, all that are not Mahometans, till they themselves are killed ; and when they are, they are reckoned saints and martyrs by their priests and the rabble. They are solemnly buried ; tombs are built for them and richly adorned ; where devotion

is paid, and alms are given ; and a good livelihood is got by the dervises that look after them. This is all pure zeal, both the murder, and the worship paid to the murderer.

What are all persecutors but furious faquirs ? Only most of them are not so much in earnest, and will run no risques to be martyrs. Will any man, who is not a Mahometan, say that these faquirs are not madmen and villains ? And yet are not all persecutors apt to do the same thing, and to use the same plea with the mad faquirs ? They are sure that their worships and opinions are true ; that the way and religion of those whom they hate and persecute are false ; and that the punishing of infidels and heretics is pleasing to God. Just so reasons the faquir, and seals his testimony with his blood. So that whether men be right or wrong in their faith and worship, they have just the same argument, and indeed the same right, to plague and oppress one another ; namely, a firm and selfish persuasion on all sides, that they are all in the right ; an argument which would keep up the rage of violence, and of fire and sword amongst men, as long as there were any left.

These raging faquirs of all denominations, have almost as much reason to kill their own brethren, who want zeal to do as they do, as to kill those of a different persuasion ; and in fact, we have often seen those sons of violence shed their bitterness and venom upon the children of their own household, merely for their candor and forbearance. It is well known how bitterly Tillotson and Hoadly, with other the best fathers of our church, have been traduced and reproached by the sour assertors of persecution, or (which is the same thing) of pains and penalties, for their noblest and most Christian sentiments, in favour of private conscience, and religious liberty. They shewed them no mercy, for their daring to be merciful. This is the true nature and extent of persecution, to have no bounds at all, but to persecute all who will not persecute. In this respect, as in many others, persecutors are all alike. They are all faquirs, whatever opposite names and badges they may wear ; and I defy the most learned and subtle of them all, let him profess what religion he pleases, to defend himself and his persecution by any one argument, by which the bloody Mahometan faquir will not be equally defended. If their religion be a good religion, they depart from it by doing mischief for it, and are wicked men for a religion that abhors wickedness ; and it is more wicked and infamous to draw a dagger for Christianity than for Mahometanism.

But, say some of them, we are not for drawing blood ; we are only for smaller penalties. Which plea is full of deceit and falsehood ; for if those penalties fail to subdue that spirit which they would subdue, the sword is the last remedy, and death comes to be one of their penalties, and the only sure one. When scarification and lancing will not do *Ense recidendum est* ; the whole limb must be lopped off. This most of them know, and are always ready to preach. Death or banishment is the only effectual cure : all the other process is but preparatory. If any thing less than the highest cruelty would suffice, Popery would want no inquisition. The court of Rome are too refined politicians to desire the infamy and reproach of that horrible tribunal, if moderate penalties, or any penalties on this side death and utter destruction would serve their turn. Whoever, therefore, would send me to gaol for my opinion, would send me to the gallows, though perhaps

he do not at first think so. If a gaol do not alter my opinion, he must either condemn himself for sending me to gaol, or condemn me to something worse. So that he who is for the smallest penalties, if he has sense or thought in him must be for the highest. What signify penalties that have no effect ?

Such are the impressions which we must naturally entertain of those cruel men, who fly to force in behalf of their faith ; and with such an ill grace do any sort of men, who are for any sort of severity in cases of religious opinions, rail at the inquisition, which is only the highest improvement of their own reasoning. It is their own scheme successfully executed. The inquisition did not arise all at once ; *Cuncta prius tentanda*. Excommunication, cursing, and other sorts of church discipline were first tried ; then followed fines and imprisonments, and the like methods to secure the papal church against schismatics : but as all these wholesome severities could not persuade men out of their senses, the last and surest attack was upon their lives. The sword of persecution was then openly drawn, its fires were publicly kindled, and downright burcheries were avowed and piously preached. These were, and for ever must be, the natural gradations ; and such beginnings, if they are at all pursued, must for ever have such ends.

It is not the least provoking part of these ungodly barbarities, that those who practise them, or desire to see them practised, have the inimitable impudence, all the while their hands are thus lifted up against God and man, to talk of religion and reason ; to pretend mercy and peace in the heat and excesses of bitterness and rage ; and to plead a regard for the souls of men, when they are acting the blackest hostilities against their bodies, fortunes, and consciences, and sacrificing their lives to hate and virulence, and to every wicked and worldly end. This is to heighten impiety by hypocrisy, to aggravate cruelty by mockery.

You talk of revelation and reason. you that are persecutors, or advocates for persecution ; but how idly, shamelessly do you talk ? What has faith to do with violence ? What has revelation to do with the sword ? If your religion be supported by reason, why seek you any other support, and such a support as is only wanted where reason is wanting ? If your religion be grounded upon revelation, how can it be proved but by revelation, ? And how is revelation tried but by reason ? What revelation tells you, or does any revelation from God tell you, that force teaches faith ? Or in what instances does reason teach, that truth is the offspring of violence, or akin to it ! Where does force explain one mathematical proposition, one doctrine of Christianity, or any doctrine ? Christ and his apostles are your only guides in Christianity. Did Christ and his apostles ever direct you to beget faith by violence, or to hurt any man for his faith ? Did they themselves ever do so ? And will you dare to do what they never did, but constantly forbid ? From what part of the gospel do you bring your axes, ropes, and dungeons, or even your fines, civil exclusions, and negative penalties, or even your anger and railing ? You know that the gospel renounces them all, and you, if you use them.

Confess the truth ; say that you employ, or would employ those savage engines in spite of the gospel, for ends purely human, and from a spirit entirely secular. Set up avowedly pride and domination against

the laws of Christ and nature, and do not increase your guilt by adding deceit to violence, by pretending to convert and reconcile men, while you oppress, alienate, and persecute them. Do not mock God and man, and pretend to gain souls by methods so monstrous and contradictory, which only shews that you seek empire over men and the souls of men. Is it thus that you would convert Pagans. if you made that any part of your business or care ? What nation of Pagans would bear you, or forbear stoning you, if when you went about to convert them, you accosted them with your whips, and chains, and human penalties, and declared your errand in the following style ?

Gentlemen, “ These are the auxiliaries of our faith. Let us persuade you to embrace it, and take us for your guides and governors ; and if afterwards you contradict us, or vary from us in the explication of our doctrines and mysteries, which cannot be explained, though we ourselves are always explaining them, and always at endless variance in these our explications, these rods and fetters abide you ; these penalties shall chastise and coerce you. In return for all which pastoral care and tenderness, we only desire you to be our subjects blindfold, and without reserve ; to give us great dignities, pomp, and revenues, and never to differ from us in any thing, however false, foolish, cruel, or wicked you may think it. At present we can only persuade you, and reason with you : but when you have established us amongst you, and set us over you, and given us a great part that you have, and all that we can have, then you may hope for full proofs of this our fatherly correction, and for all these our temporal terrors ; and never afterwards to be suffered to have the trouble of using your reason, which God has given you, against our authority, which you will have given us, or which we shall have taken to ourselves, at first by your connivance or consent ; but thenceforth to be exercised over you, whether you will or no. And though we must judge you, and censure you, and punish you as we think fit ; and though we accept of all your gifts and bounties ; yet you must not dare to judge nor to censure us, much less to degrade or chastise us, let our tyranny be ever so severe, our lives ever so enormous ; nor expect back from us any part of the wealth, which you will have given us, whether it was obtained by force, or fear, or fraud, or by whatever other means. Upon these conditions, gentlemen, out of our tender regard for your souls, we are willing to accept you for our slaves.”

I appeal to all men, and to the experience of all men, whether, when any man who is for penalties and persecutions, goes about to convert a nation of Pagans, or any nation, these are not, upon his principles, the comfortable terms and fruits of their conversion. Let him consider what people upon earth would not dread and reject him, if he escaped so well. But if he apply to them with persuasion and gentleness at first, and basely conceal from them these his severe and proud purposes, then he is a deceiver, and justly deserves all the ill usage which he unjustly intends for others.

But quite different and contrary must be the speech and behaviour of a man who would only propagate Christianity without low or high regards to himself, or without mixing his own selfish passion with his zeal. Such a man would tell them honestly and openly :

Gentlemen, " You are in a very wrong way ; your religion is ill-grounded, and only serves to deceive you, and to frighten you : if you will hear me, I will teach you a better, and the only one that is good. If you like it, I have my ends, if you do not like it, the worst will be yours, and I have done you no harm. Over those who embrace it I claim no power. You are to continue Christians by the same means that made you Christians ; that is, by meekness, arguments, and the grace of God. I will not be such a deceiver as to turn the persuasions which I now use with you into violence and power afterwards. If any of you or yours desert my religion, after having tried it, or exercise it in a manner different from mine, I will pray for you and persuade you. But force and bitterness I abominate. They are against the genius of the religion which I bring you ; as impotent and improper to bring back into it those who are lapsed from it, as to draw them into it at first. If any of you believe not my religion, he is a hypocrite if he assent to it ; and if I tempted him to do so by gain, or frightened him by worldly pains and threats, I should share in his hypocrisy. But if he believe it, he will want no terror or temptation to profess it. For myself, gentlemen, you will judge when you have heard me, whether it is worth your while to support me amongst you. Other provision than this, the disinterested religion which I teach makes none for me."

I leave it with my readers to consider which of these two speeches would be the most Christian, and which would be likely to be best heard, and to make most proselytes in a country of unbelievers.

NUMBER 64.

Mutual Bitterness and Persecution amongst Christians, how repugnant to the Gospel, and how shocking to a rational Pagan.

REASON is not the only thing in which men exceed brutes. Their passions, as well as their reasons, are stronger than those of the dumb creation, and prompt them to commit more abominable things. To qualify and restrain those passions is the business of religion ; and where it has contrary effects, it is either a bad religion, or they are very bad men who profess it. By this rule all men may know what sort of Christians they are ; " Except ye love one another," says our blessed Saviour, " you cannot be my disciples." How different from the style of many who call themselves his successors ! " Unless you hate, kill, and destroy one another, you cannot be our followers."

The only end of Christianity, as to this life, was to teach men peace, charity, mutual forbearance, and the forgiveness of injuries. This was the new Commandment which Jesus Christ gave to his apostles, and to all Christians. How ill it has been observed ; or rather, how impiously it has been violated, let those whose duty it more especially was to

see it obeyed, consider ; whether they have not inflamed, instead of calming, the natural heat and foolish passions of men ? and far from instructing them to forgive injuries, have not taught them never to forgive things which were no injuries, namely, the faith and opinions of one another, and to commit real injuries to revenge nominal injuries ?

If a man halt in his understanding, how is any one injured by his intellectual lameness more than by the lameness of his limbs ? If his opinions are crooked and wild, what offence is that to another more than if he squinted, or had a wild look ? Error is an infirmity of the mind, as pain, halting, or crookedness are of the body ; why should his internal any more than his external defects, provoke any rational man ? Would not he who went about to persecute or invent penalties for crookedness, be looked upon as a monster equally cruel with those savages who drown all their innocent new born babes, whose make does not please their eye ? And is not hating, hurting, or killing, for the natural or habitual weaknesses of the soul, equally monstrous and savage ? What is it to any man what I think of colours ? and whether I like or dislike white or black ? or what sentiments, which are the colours of the mind, fit mine best ? or with what words I clothe these colours ? or what actions or gestures they produce in me, provided my actions and gestures hurt not him ? Does he by hating or distressing me, fulfil our Saviour's commandment of loving one another ? Are his own notions right ? Let him enjoy them : he is happy. Are my notions wrong ? I am unhappy : why does he persecute me ? Perhaps fortune has been kinder to him than to me, and he is richer and handsomer : why does he not chastise me for this fault too, because I cannot force fortune no more than nature ? But the truth is, none persecute but the worst, the most ignorant, or the most barbarous men. By this mark we know a Nero from an Antoninus, and a fatherly pastor from a bloody inquisitor.

The perverting of no one thing upon earth is so bad, and so sinful, as the perverting of Christianity ; because Christianity is the best thing upon earth. He therefore who makes use of Christianity to raise heats, feuds, and hatred amongst men, is a much worse man than he who having no Christianity, can make no ill use of that which he does not use at all. It is like turning the best medicine into poison ; and a physician who does so, is worse than a peasant who knows no physic. It is a strange and astonishing sight to see a man in a rage, with the New Testament open before him, justifying his rage out of the Testament, and raising from thence in his hearers, a cruel and angry spirit like his own. And yet such sights are far from being rare. I have frequently seen a text from the pious and peaceable gospel, quoted and explained to rouse all the most barbarous and unsocial passions : and this has been confidently called preaching the gospel, and this herald of wrath a preacher of the gospel, and his raging hearers a religious assembly.

I have sometimes fancied to myself what a sensible Chinese would think of the gospel upon reading it, in what manner he would conceive it would be preached, and what consequences he would expect from that preaching. " Here, he would say, is the most meek and benevolent system that ever appeared in the world : a system, contrived to

root out the roughness, malignity, and selfishness of human nature, to extinguish or restrain all its sour passions, to destroy for ever all the seeds of strife, anger and war, and to make all men friends. Happy are they who receive this system ! more happy they amongst whom it is continually preached and inculcated ! Here is no pretence for divisions, at least for quarrelling about them. Here all the pomp and tyranny, affected by men over men, are expressly forbid, and love even to our enemies is strictly enjoined. This is admirable ! Without doubt, it is from God. The divine Being, in pity to the ill natured, jarring, and tempestuous world, has here offered them a divine calm, and restored them to a state of perfection and innocence, by giving them these celestial rules for bearing and forbearing all manner of evils : would I could be a witness of the happy state of Christendom."

I have fancied this same Chinese in Christendom ; and first in Rome, the centre of Christendom, the residence of his holiness, and the seat of all abominations, poisonings, assassinations, unnatural lust, pride, ambition, divisions, tyranny, luxury, poverty, and oppression. There he sees an old friar who calls himself the vicar of the meek Jesus, covered with all the ensigns of savage tyranny, supporting his monstrous and motly domination, with dark intrigues, and every pious and worldly fraud ; holding his own subjects under severe fetters and famine, scattering every where fire-brands, and the spirit of slaughter and war amongst Christians ; animating sovereigns against their people, the people against their sovereigns ; and giving his apostolic benediction to human rage and malice.

The Chinese asks if his holiness be a Christian according to the gospel ? Yes, he is answered, he is what he is from the gospel, and all that he does is for it. The Chinese blesses himself, and the more Christian spirit of good old Confucius. He is just ready to return to China again, to a happier people, and more virtuous Paganism ; but meets with a Protestant, who tells him, that all the wickedness which he finds at Rome, is the abuse of religion, and the natural effects of the Pope's lying pretensions and usurpations ; and begs him to visit Protestant countries, which abhor the Pope, and all his doings.

The Chinese ravished to hear that the Gospel does not fare every where alike, and in hopes of beholding societies of men, who are Christians according to the gospel, travels through part of the empire, where he finds Lutherans and Calvinists, headed by their guides, at mortal enmity. They both believe the gospel, but rail at one another out of it, hate one another for it, and are only restrained by their Princes from contending even to blood about words which are not in it. In Denmark and Sweden he finds the Lutherans still fiercer, and suffering no sort nor name of Christianity amongst them but their own, and treating all others with the highest pitch of fury and ignorance.

The Chinese, who thinks the Lutheran Popes as little justifiable as the Popish Pope, since they alike set up for spiritual dominion, which the gospel gives to no man upon earth, does once more praise old Confucius ; and resolved to find, if he can, the spirit of Christianity in some Christian country, sails away for Great Britain, and lands in Scotland. There he beholds a rigid gravity in the countenance of the Kirk ; she affects great sanctity, has an eminent conceit of her own righteousness, but finds righteousness no where else. She has a very strong

stomach for dominion, but sweetens it with a soft name, and calls it discipline, which she exercises with little tenderness upon such as offend her, or grieve her; and towards all other churches and opinions, her looks are sour and unforgiving. She talks much of the Lord, and contends that nothing is to be done by any man without God's grace moving in him, and assisting him, which is in no man's power. But for all that, if you want that grace, of which she is judge, or if you do not learn it from her, and submit implicitly to her, though she be not the giver of grace, you will find that she asserts a claim, as well as his holiness, to chastise wrong faith and obstinacy; for though the Pope, being the man of sin, has no such right, yet she who is the daughter of Zion, is entitled to it.

The Chinese cries, that here is much loud and warm zeal, very long prayers, a world of bitterness, but no charity. In England, says he, there is more knowledge and freedom: I will try England. In it he finds great and free liberty of conscience, and rejoices in it, but sees those who should be most for it, most implacable against it. He sees churchmen nobly provided for, but many of them not satisfied; on the contrary, claiming ten times more, and wildly supporting those claims by the gospel, and by the example of cheating and usurping Popish monks; sees them railing at private conscience, damning all that have it, and calling for the temporal sword to destroy them. He sees great part of the dissenters, who, after much suffering, enjoy this precious liberty, not contented with it, nor mended by their sufferings, but setting up for this same anti-christian spiritual domination, and taking as far as they can, the blessing and protection of the merciful law from one another. The Chinese applauds the wisdom, gentleness, and Christian spirit of the legislature, and finds the chief human security for the gospel in an act of Parliament, by which every man has the natural and Christian privilege to read, understand, and apply it his own way. "This," says he, "is Christianity according to the gospel, which, by observation, I find can only subsist where all sorts of consciences, the wise and the weak, are entirely unmolested, where no sort of power is exercised over the soul, and where every man understands and interprets with security the words of Christ, and of Paul, as he judges Christ and Paul meant them. No two things, not heaven and hell, not good and evil, are more opposite than force and faith. The one is only from the good God, the other only from the worst passions of the worst men."

NUMBER 65.

Of the strange Force of Education, especially in Matters of Religion.

How far the force of example influences nature, and enlarges or restrains the human passions and appetites, is evident to all who compare different nations, and the several ranks of men in the same nation.

Custom, which is a continued succession of examples, warps the understanding ; and as it is observed or neglected, becomes the standard of wisdom or folly. Men cannot bear to see what they themselves reverence, ridiculed by others ; nor what they ridicule, revered by others. It is a common thing to breed up men in a veneration for one sort of folly, and in a contempt for another not worse, nor so bad ; in a high esteem for one kind of science, and in aversion to another, full as good ; to love some men merely because they have good names, and to hate others for their best qualities ; to adore some objects for a bad reason, to detest others against all reason.

In Turkey they have as good natural understanding as other people ; and yet by their education are taught to believe that there is a sort of divinity in the utter absence of all understanding : they esteem idiots and lunatics as prophets. They think their raving to be celestial, because it is nonsense ; and their stupidity instructive, because unintelligible. If upon the article of religion you offer or expect common sense, they revile you, and knock you on the head ; but if you be a natural fool, your words are oracles, and phrenzy is saintship.

A Papist laughs and shakes his head at this religious sottishness and fury of the Turks, but burns you if you laugh at him for doing the same things. There never were greater sots and madmen than many of the Roman saints ; nor are they the less worshipped for that, but the more. As they were enthusiasts in proportion to their lunacy, they are adored in proportion to their folly. St. Francis, for instance, was an errant changeling ; St. Antony was distracted : yet who is of more consequence in the Roman breviaries, than those two saints ? They are daily invoked by many devout catholics who never prayed to God in their lives.

That all this wild and astonishing bigotry is the pure effect of example, or of education, which is the same thing, (being only some men setting examples to other men,) may be learnt from hence, that no man bred without superstition, or in any particular way of it, can be brought into the vanities of any strange devotion at once, and rarely ever. People must be seasoned in it by time, by steps, and reiterations ; after certain periods in life, examples come too late, or with small force. A grown Spaniard can hardly ever be a Frenchman ; nor a Frenchman be a Spaniard. We see men will fight and die for certain practices and opinions, and even for follies and fopperies, which, had they been bred to others, they would have despised, and perhaps have died for such as they now despise.

It is plain from the accounts, even the partial and disguised accounts, given by the missionaries, of the progress which they make in converting the natives of the East and West Indies, that their proselytes are very few, and those few fickle, not half made, and lukewarm ; still fond of their old superstitions, and upon every terror or temptation, ready to revolt to Paganism, which they had scarce forsaken. I believe this is almost universally true of the elder sort : I doubt they are almost all like father Hennepin's old woman, who, when all other arguments were unconvincing, yielded to be baptized for a pipe of tobacco, and having smoked it, offered to be baptized again for another. It is certain that the Chinese have converted the Jesuits, who have at least civilly met these obstinate heathens half way, and

gone roundly into Paganism, to make the Pagans good Catholics : an union not unnatural ; only I am sorry that the peaceable beatbenism of Confucius should be debauched by the barbarous spirit of Popery, which has not only from the beginning adopted the ancient Gentile Idolatry, but disgraced it by cruelty.

I am satisfied that the famous doctor in Holbourn,* is a very sincere keen Churchman ; but I am equally satisfied, that had he been educated in the Mosaic way, he would have been as fierce a Jew ; or bred at Athens, in the days of Socrates, as clamorous as the rest of the rabble against that wise and moderate man, who was doubtless a heretic as to the doctrine and discipline of the Athenian priests. If in this conjecture I have offended the doctor, who, they say, is a man of warm spirit, I will give him competent revenge, by declaring my equal belief that many a stern Calvinist, zealous in his way, would with different breeding have been as zealous in a different way. I could wish that from this consideration both sorts would learn to bear with one another, and with all men ; that at least they would be as angry at Mahomet, as at Dr. Clarke, and learn not to attack heresy through the sides of charity. But in this very thing the force of example, of which I am talking, is against me.

By this force men may be brought to renounce every glimmering of common sense, every impulse of pity, and be transported with every degree of madness and inhumanity. In many countries the death of a snake will cost you your life ; and those people who would murder a man and eat him, would tremble at the thought of hurting a serpent, for which pernicious reptile they have a religious regard. The unnatural mercy which superstition teaches them, is the only mercy that they have, and exercised upon a creature that is a known enemy to human life.

The Iroquois not satisfied with putting their enemies to death in cold blood, burn them alive, after other tortures, cut off peices of their raw flesh, and eat them, and give the children the blood to drink, to season their young minds with the like sanguinary spirit. Thus the cruelty is continued by example from father to son, and grows natural by habit. Their enemies serve them the same way ; but this consideration reclaims neither. It is heroism to be barbarous, and the fiercest cannibal is the bravest warrior. Yet these savages are, in their own clans, merciful and good natured to one another, and live together, in remarkable innocence, simplicity and union.

As these American nations, who thus destroy one another, are very thin, there is more than territory enough for them all ; nor is husbandry any of their arts ; and there are woods large enough for many more to hunt in, and rivers to fish in : and all living from hand to mouth, they do not much mind property. But inveterate quarrels, handed down from generation to generation, and daily inflamed, perpetuate their mutual ferocity and rage. They often watch many days in hunger and cold, to circumvent their enemy, though nothing is to be expected at last but blood, lost or got : but blood, on whatever side shed, is glory.

* Dr. Sacheverel, minister of St. Andrew's Holbourn, when these papers were written.

In some parts of Peru this savageness is still improved. Their chief ambition in war is to make women captives. These they make their slaves in a strange way : they breed out of them, and eat the children so bred at the age of ten or twelve having first well-fatted them ; and the women, when they can breed no longer, are eaten last. Amongst these people the sense of shame seems entirely extinguished, or rather never known. Their prostitutions natural and unnatural, are as public as their eating and drinking. Some of them account virginity a great blemish, and the young women must be beholden to their friends and relations to get rid of it, before they can get husbands. Their women ran openly after the Spaniards, in all the transports of female rage, begging the gratifications of gallantry. But, what is still most monstrous and incredible, there are of those people, who have public temples for the practice of sodomy, as an act of religion : for, with all these abominations, they have a religion, which is part of them ; and we see in them into what excesses mistakes in religion can run. They believe the immortality of the soul ; they have offices for the dead ; they worship the sun ; they believe a creator of all things ; they offer sacrifices to their idols, and sometimes human sacrifices. Will any of our casuists say, that it were not better they had no religion, than one that teaches them such hideous crimes and barbarities ? I wish that these brutal heathens were the only instances, where reason and humanity are made victims to religion. But customs of religion and honour, right or wrong, (as both are commonly vilely mistaken and abused,) are apt to take an inveterate hold of the human soul, and to master every natural faculty.

It would be a hard, if not an impossible thing to convert these Peruvian savages. There is no weaning them from their horrible and delicious banquets of human flesh, alive or dead : and while they themselves have such a relish of man's blood, they will always think it acceptable to the gods. For men every where imagine that the deity loves and hates just as they do ; and their common way of going to God, is to bring God to them.

It is as easy to bring an Englishman into the way and life of a Hottentot, or Greenlander, as to bring them into his. Both are impossible ; the Hottentot is nasty and naked, and lives or starves upon filth ; the Greenlander lives in piercing and inhospitable regions of snow in a country made desolate by nature, where no comfortable thing appears, but all covered with darkness, or the rage of the elements. Yet both these miserable barbarians, miserable in our eyes, are inveterately fond of their own caves and miseries ; nor could all the delicacies and allurements of Europe ever reclaim one of them. Their captivity, in the midst of plenty, conveniencies, and kind usage, either broke their hearts, or attached them more violently to their own more amiable barbarity, indigence, and garbage, when they returned.

What shall we say to all these strange fondnesses, strange but natural ? they are effects of habit and prepossession, from which no man is wholly free ; by which almost all men are wholly governed ; and from all this a good lesson is to be learned. how men ought to use one another.

NUMBER 66.

The extravagant Notions and Practice of Penance, how generally prevailing as a necessary Part of Religion, even amongst such as know not, or neglect all the other and real Penalties.

My last was concerning the power of example and education. I shall in this pursue the same subject as far as it relates to penance, or the undergoing voluntary miseries for God's sake. At what time it came into the world, I do not know ; but the universal esteem and influence which it has gained in it amongst the Gentiles, Christians, and Mahometans, is surprising to consider. It is probable that it was begun by melancholy enthusiasts, who supposing the Deity to be like themselves a gloomy and sorrowful being, believed that he delighted, as they did, in splenetic and mortifying actions ; and having no revelation but what they took for such, their own dreams and vapours, thought that their religious worship ought to be as wild and horrid as their imaginations were. Thus it is likely, that men first cheated themselves, and were afterwards the more easily cheated by others, and fraud improved what phrenzy began.

But, whatever was the original of penance, its progress has been prodigious, and it has gained strange and invincible strength. It has run out into such numerous branches, and into such extravagant excesses, that there is no room left for any new device or improvement. To it have been sacrificed ease, health, and convenience ; the necessary appetites of nature ; the faculties of the soul ; self-pity and tenderness ; all the pleasures of life, and life itself. People have been brought to vie with one another in famine, thirst and torture, and to engage with zeal in a combat for misery.

As great a mummary as penance is made in the Roman church, and as easily as it is dispensed with, there are still many amongst them who afflict themselves with great cruelty, and even kill themselves by it. It is for the glory of the church that numbers should shew themselves in earnest in this savage devotion ; and therefore on their penitential days so many are seen vehemently bruising and scarifying their own flesh, and covering themselves, and the ground which they go on, with their own blood. Some actually die under this inhuman discipline ; some soon after. One would think that these self-murderers considered themselves as martyrs.

The men of galantry amongst these devout Catholics, especially in Spain and Portugal, are actuated by a carnal, as well as spiritual devotion on these occasions ; and make love to God and their mistresses by one and the same religious feat of barbarity. It is plain from hence, that they believe the merciful God to have the cruel heart of a coquet ; and that both his and hers are to be won by pitiless stripes, and the loss of blood. I wonder that they have not for this double end made a holy exercise of their bull feasts, in which so many lovers do such desperate things, and expose their lives. For their mistresses

are in no other danger than that of losing their lovers. Their acts of faith are more barbarous than their bull feasts.

But at the same time that the more fierce devotees of that church are furnished with acts of penance, as rigid as their spirit ; others, not so fond of pain, are more gently accommodated. The holding in the breath for a second or two, once or twice in a day, or a week ; or saying a few Ave-Maria's extraordinary, or repeating the words *Jesu amabilis*, half a dozen times, or carrying half a pound of lead or iron in the sinner's pocket, are all good and valid penances upon such as can bear no harder.

Delicate ladies, who cannot endure such robust atonements for sin, are complimented with a discipline still softer, and as tender, if possible, as their sex and iniquity. However, their penance is very mortifying ; for they are sometimes commanded not to wear gloves for at least half a night together, and sometime no lace for a whole day. If their crimes be very flagitious, they are without any mercy obliged, by the severe Confessor to go in stuff, instead of silk, for two days, without any abatement ; and sometimes, which is more cruel, ordered to quit the company of their spark a full minute sooner than they would, at least for once or twice. Nay, I have heard of some, who, as an adequate mortification for the sin of pride, were forbid looking in the glass for a night and a day. Who would sin under such heavy penalties ? If they do, it is a sign that sin must be very sweet.

But even these soft votaries, the gentle fair, are sometimes as merciless to their tender tabernacles as the most boisterous male penitents. The famous monsieur Huet, a most learned man, but a miserable bigot, in an Eloge of his upon one of his sisters, gives us an affecting instance of the power of religious folly under the name of penance : he says, that, bent upon a religious life, she was put into a nunnery, where she found none of their mortifications severe enough for her ; nor could she find in any books any rules and lessons of penance so rigid as her own zeal. She therefore racked her invention for new and uncommon ways of afflicting herself. Such was her devout passion to suffer for God ; *Souffrir pour Dieu*, as he calls it. She heard that great thirst was an exquisite torment, and believed so from the pleasure of quenching it ; she therefore resolved never to drink more. In this cruel course she persevered, without being perceived ; for she spilt her drink in the refectory. Nor did the disorders that came fast upon her, dispose her in the least to any mercy upon herself. Her illnesses were incurable before the secret that caused them came out. She discovered it by the authority of her confessor, too late : remedies signified nothing, and she could take nothing ; her stomach was gone ; the functions of nature ceased ; her whole body was scorched up, and her skin parched like a scroll. She confessed, that, in the course of her unnatural abstinence, such was the extremity of her thirst and heat, that she beheld the swine with envy for the filthy puddle that they enjoyed, and would have given any thing but heaven for a refreshment of the mire in which they wallowed.

If one was not taught by experience, that enthusiasm is capable of reconciling the wildest contradictions, it would appear impossible that God Almighty should be beloved by those who think him delighted with cruelty ; or feared by those who believed him appeased by tri-

des. But I am satisfied, from observation and charity, that both sorts are in earnest; and that, if we allowed none to be sincerely religious, but such whose religion is warranted by principles of reason, we should find but very few religious men upon earth. Even they, or most of those, who are of the only true religion, blend it with so many chimeras and absurdities, and put their own vain superstructures upon so equal a foot with the foundation, that were you to leave them no more than enough, they would think you left them nothing, and call you a persecutor, though you forced really nothing from them but their follies.

In an insurrection of the priests and populace of Sweden, upon the loss of their bells, and other ecclesiastical furniture, at the beginning of the reformation there, when both sides were differently inflamed upon the same cause, the court sent to that zealous rabble to know their demands. In answer, they insisted upon these two principal articles, among others; "That all the heretics, that is, all the Protestants, must be burnt; and they must have their bells again." Bells and burning were really parts of their religion, as every man's religion is what he thinks so; and penance is another part, a part essential to Popery, and to the domination of the clergy. Upon their authority the necessity of penance is established, and by their appointment it is inflicted. It is so important a pillar of their trade, that they have made it a sacrament; and from it derive no small power and gain. Upon the people it is, in every view and degree, a monstrous cheat and abuse. Where it is slight, it is mockery; where it is severe, it is barbarity; in either case it is servitude. It is a complication of imposture and tyranny over the understandings, persons, and properties of men. But such is the witchcraft of superstition, that men are slaves by their own consent. They would venture their lives to defend their misery, and the authors of it; and murder the man who would release them from chains. Thus they are educated, in fear and abhorrence of common sense; and where enthusiasm has taken possession, there is no re-entrance for reason; which is indeed marked out as an enemy, and constant war maintained against it.

It is not only possible, but easy, to bring up a child to worship a pair of tongs, or a monkey's tooth; and in those matters the child generally forms the man, who often adores rust and rottenness when he is old, because he did it when he was young; nay, time and experience, which sometimes cure other follies, add to this. Religious folly is a mistress, which her votaries scarce ever enjoy to satiety; but, unlike other mistresses, the more she is enjoyed, the more she is idolized; and the uglier, the more engaging. If we can but bear her at first, we will soon come to like her: liking will improve into love, and love into dotage. The highest transports of this fairy passion are found under grey hairs, and in frozen veins. The older, the more amorous: So that in this instance, if we do not learn wisdom when we are young, we shall be children when we are old.

NUMBER 67.

The Principles and Practice of Penance ; its Extravagance and its Tendency further considered.

I INTEND in this paper to say something further of penance, which always keeps pace with ignorance and error : it is lost where knowledge abounds, and triumphs in darkness ; but more or less, according to the heat or temperance of the climate, and of the constitutions of men. In Spain and Italy, where the power of the sun, and of priests, and ignorance, prevails so abundantly, godly savageness of all kinds prevails in proportion : in other countries, where the air and people's tempers are cooler, zeal is cooler ; and where there is a toleration of common sense, very cool. Eastward, in proportion to the increase of heat and ignorance, holy austerities increase ; and Turks, Christians, and Pagans, are rivals in the rigours of penance.

Smith, in his account of the Greek church, talking of their strict observation both of the annual and weekly fasts, says, " They retain them most religiously, and think it a grievous sin herein to transgress the laws of the church, in the least ; partly, out of a principle of conscience, and partly, through long custom and practice, which make the greatest hardships and severities of life tolerable and easy. They have gained a perfect mastery over their appetites ; and are so far from complaining of the tediousness and rigour of their fasts, that they will not hear of any abatement and relaxation, but would be rather apt to retain strong jealousies and apprehensions, that their whole religion would be in danger, if there were the least indulgence permitted in so necessary a part of it.—Some are so strangely devout, or rather superstitious, that they will not touch any thing that is forbidden ; so that if by chance a drop of wine or oil should fall upon their bread, or any of their lawful food, they think them polluted and profaned, and accordingly throw them away ; and had rather (out of obstinacy and desperation) perish either through hunger or sickness, than be guilty of so grievous a sin, as they esteem it.—The women submit very readily to these rigours ; and boys of six or seven years of age endure as much as they are able."

The Christians of Armenia are at least as rigid. Monsieur Tavernier says, " Their austerities are such, that many of their bishops never eat flesh or fish above four times a year ; and when they come to be archbishops, they only live upon pulse. Six months and three days in a year they keep Lent, or particular fasts ; and during that time, both ecclesiastics and laics live only upon bread, and some few herbs which grow in their gardens. The superstition of one Zulpha, an Armenian, was so great that he made his horse fast with him, allowing him little provender or drink for a whole week together. The poor labouring people feed only upon pulse boiled with salt. During their Lent they are not permitted, no more than others, to eat butter or oil ; nay, though they lay dying, it is not lawful for them to eat flesh upon fast days."

With all these religious sufferings, the Greeks and Armenians have very little religion amongst them, but devout fooleries, superstition and pious forgeries in abundance. They are a debauched, base, and licentious people without purity and virtue ; as excessive in their depravities and intemperance, as in their penance, which only annoys nature, without mending the heart. On the contrary, it is an incitement to sin, as it is a composition for sinning, an equivalent to Almighty God for breaking his laws. A balsam for iniquity, is only a motive to commit it ; and that balsam is penance.

The Turks are not less barbarous to their own bodies in their religious severities than are the Greeks and Armenians. Many of them would suffer swooning and death, rather than break their appointed fasts. But the Indian Pagans far exceed them all in this sort of merit. The life of many of the Bramins is a perpetual life of misery by choice, of various and exquisite misery. To go stark naked under a scorching sun, stung and devoured by vermin, which religion forbids them to destroy ; to live in constant abstinence from all pleasures, and from refreshments above once in some days, and sometimes many days ; to sit in the same painful posture upon their folded legs for years together, or to stand upon one leg, or to lean upon the trunk of a tree, with their arms exalted unnaturally over their heads, never to be let down ; and to continue in these tormenting situations as long as they live : to mortify every appetite ; to maintain an eternal fight against nature and sensation ; to court distress ; to invite pain ; to study torture ; to hang by the hair upon a tree, or tied by a sharp rope about the middle ; to renounce all speech and cleanliness for ever ; to ward off sleep by cruelty and a rack, and never to shut their eyes till they are shut eternally : these are some of the voluntary penances which many of the oriental Pagan doctors inflict upon themselves. They are almost as barbarous to their penitents, whom they torture and starve by way of religious discipline : Some they hang by the flesh upon iron hooks, till the weight of their bodies and the sharpness of the iron tear the hold, and the miserable penitents, tumble down.

And all this not as an atonement for sin, but to acquire a stock of merit, and to humour the deity. They are thus religious and distracted through ambition to be as great hereafter, as they are wretched and ridiculous here : and (agreeably to their notions of transmigration) to return into the world again Rajahs and Omrahs, that is great lords and princes. It is all selfishness, but selfishness turned by superstition against nature. Hence we see a reason for the haughtiness of mortified men, and why enthusiasts and bigots are the proudest of all men. They have more conceit of their merit, and more aspiring views. What is so sublime as to be the special favourites of heaven ? and who can equal them ?

Baumgarten, the traveller, tells us of a Saracen saint, who arrived at the glory of saintship, not only by living austerely in the desert, and refusing the use of women, but by lying carnally with mules and asses, instead of women. This bestiality was imputed to him for religion and righteousness, and procured him canonization. Indeed, many in the Roman calendar deserves it less. He only defiled himself and some brutes of the wilderness : but the Catholic saints have polluted and poi-

torment mankind with their superstitions, and merited their title by more extensive mischiefs, by endless frauds and massacres.

Now what is the use of all these, or any of these severities called penances? By what precept of God, or of nature, are they commanded? That they disorder and afflict the body and spirit, is most certain: that they can do good to either, has not the face of probability. To say, that they please God, is to say, that God takes pleasure in human miseries and pain. To say, that they dispose the soul to serve him, is as absurd: they fill the mind with gloominess and chimeras; and it is a shocking character of the almighty, to suppose him served by infatuation and madness.

We are indeed told in scripture, of fasting, of sackcloth, and ashes: But, if by these words any thing more is meant (as I believe there is not) than a departure from intemperance and riot, than shame and concern for vice; I do not conceive their signification. Without rest, food, and other conveniencies, man cannot subsist; his nature requires perpetual recruits; and as long as we must live, where can be the crime of living easily?

It is Heathenism and superstition to believe, that crimes can be expiated by starving, stripes, and the absence of rest. To such as think the deity a barbarous being, such expedients to please him may seem necessary: They therefore who worshipped Demons, cut themselves with knives, made their children pass through fire, and offered human sacrifices, as devout barbarities agreeable to the genius of their gods. When a great idol in the East-Indies (I think 'tis in Bengal) is carried forth in procession, on a solemn festival, in a chariot, some of the Indians are mad enough to throw themselves under the wheels which support that ponderous idol, and are instantly crushed to death, in pursuit of the glory of martyrdom, and as an acceptable sacrifice to that inanimate deity.

Wherever the devil is adored, as he is in many places, penance is a great and indispensable part of the adoration paid him; and 'tis natural to imagine a raging, cruel, and avaricious being delighted with cruelty and gifts; as it is impious and unnatural to think, that the God of wisdom and mercy is to be bribed with money or blood, and rendered propitious by merciless and foolish actions. He is always propitious; he has no fury to be appeased, no caprice to be humoured, no avarice to be satiated: he who endowed us with reason and humanity, cannot require of us a behaviour that is frantic and inhuman; he who gave us all things, wants nothing; no gifts for gifts, no share in his own bounty. A rich man who bestows alms, claims none of his own alms again; and it would be an affront to offer it: neither do our friends and patrons desire to see us beat, famish, and impoverish ourselves, in humour and gratitude to them. If we were thus mad, without doubt they would restrain us, probably send us to Bedlam. And can we believe, that the omnipotent God is to be charmed with follies, that are below the reason and dignity of men? That infinite wisdom approves things which are ridiculous and offensive to common sense? That the merciful God, the maker and preserver of men, takes pleasure in the pains and sorrows of men, in their stupidity and extravagance, and in feats of rigour and anguish, such as shock good-nature?

I am the larger and warmer upon this subject, because the Nonjuring clergy, and those who agree with them in every thing but in not taking the oaths, have shewn so much zeal, and preached and written so much for the restoration of penance, among the other chimeras and barbarities of Popery. It is a doctrine admirably contrived for intoxicating and enslaving the spirits and persons of men, and for opening their purses ; and no wonder that the advocates for levitical empire are so fierce for it. But, as it can never be introduced, without the total extripation of all civil and religious liberty, it becomes all sober Christians and rational men to be as zealous against it.

NUMBER 68.

*The Teachers of all Sects (who lay claim to Power and Submission)
how apt to reproach, yet how much resembling each other.*

ALL sects reproach one another ; but though all their reproaches be generally too well grounded, they should in good policy spare them, and be equally silent, since most can equally recriminate. By the contrary conduct they do but furnish one another with reciprocal weapons, invite an assault by giving it, and arm men of free and unlisted minds against them all. " Why do you keep the Bible from the laity ?" says a Protestant minister to a Popish priest : " Why do you not give it them in their own tongue ?" The priest answers, " Why do you not give it them in their own sense ?" " So we do," says the minister, " when their sense of it is orthodox ;" " that is, when they submit to your sense," says the priest. " Just so do we, but with more sincerity. We tell them they cannot, they shall not understand it for themselves. And while both you and we keep the spirit and explication of it to ourselves, what avails the dead letter ? What signifies poring over leaves and print with another man's eyes ? If they must not understand it as they please, where is the pleasure of reading ? Would it not be downright mockery in me, to say to you, Sir, some men are so barbarous as to let their necessitous friends go naked. There's Lord Peter does so, an inhuman wretch, though he pretends to be the most fatherly and most Christian creature alive. But my name is John or Martin ; I hate Lord Peter, and abominate his example so much, that I neither eat nor drink with him. I will, therefore, in charity to your poor carcass, give you freely a suit of clothes ; they shall be made solely for your use, and be entirely yours. But because, though you want them sadly, you are not qualified to wear them yourself, I will wear them for you. But you may declare to all the world, as I will, that they are your clothes, and that you have the free use of them ; though for good reasons, you are not permitted to make use of that use ; and you and I will rail plentifully all the while at Lord Peter, who keeps all the wool to himself, and will not allow his

creatures and followers a rag of clothes, like a miser as he is ! a wolf : a tyrant !”

I know not what the Protestant could answer to this raillery of the Catholic. To say that the Pope is anti-christ, and an usurper would be no answer, or a foolish one. For, I take upon me to maintain, that anti-christ has as valid a right to be an usurper, and to do ill and inconsistent things, as any good Christian whatsoever. I do further aver on the other side, that the Bible is of no use but to be understood ; that another man's understanding is not my understanding ; that heretics and scismatics have as much need to read the Scripture, as any the most orthodox and conforming man ; that the laity have souls to be saved as well as the clergy ; that the word of God is of sovereign use thereunto ; and that no man can be pious or knowing by proxy.

We ought at least to be free from the faults with which we upbraid others. The Popish travellers relate with abhorrence the superstitious phrenzies, and religious barbarities of the modern Pagans, which, compared with those of their own church are few and tolerable. Their church has refined the godly madness of heathenism, enlarged it beyond bounds, carried pious wickedness as far as human craft and selfishness can carry it.

The Lama or arch-priest of Great Tartary, is a considerable monster, and described as a hideous one by Catholic writers, who adore the Pope, a monster more complicated and terrible. Dr. Gemelli, a Romish traveller, tells us, “ That impious and ridiculous adoration is paid by the Tartars to a living man, whom they call Lama, that is, great priest or priest of priests ; because from him, as the source, they receive all the grounds of their religion or idolatry ; and therefore they give him the name of eternal father. This man is adored as a deity, not only by the inhabitants of the place, but by all the kings of Tartary, who own a subjection to him in matters of religion. And therefore not only these kings, but their people, go in pilgrimage, with considerable gifts, to adore him as a true and living God. He, as a great favour, shews himself in a dark place of his palace, adorned with gold and silver, and lighted by several hanging lamps, sitting upon a cushion of cloth of gold, on a place raised from the ground, and covered with fine carpets. Then they all prostrate themselves flat on the ground, and humbly kiss his foot. Hence he is called father of fathers, high-priest, priest of priests, and eternal father. For the priests, who are the only persons who attend, and wait on him upon all occasions, make the simple strangers believe wonders of his sanctity. And, that he may be thought immortal when he dies, they seek out through all the kingdom for one very like him ; and having found one, place him upon the throne, and make all the kingdom hold it as an article of faith, (they being all ignorant of the imposture) that the eternal father rose again out of hell, after seven hundred years, and has lived ever since, and will live to eternity : which is so deeply imprinted on the minds of those barbarous people, that no man amongst them makes the least doubt of it. They adore him so blindly, that he thinks himself completely happy, who has the fortune to get the least bit of his excrement, which is bought at a great rate. They believe that by wearing it about their necks in a gold box, as the great lords use to do, it is a sure defence against all evils, and an antidote against

all diseases ; and there are those, who out of devotion put some of it into their meat. This living deity is of such great authority throughout all Tartary, that no king is crowned till he has sent ambassadors with rich presents to obtain the great Lama's blessing, for a happy and prosperous reign. His residence is in the kingdom of Barautola, or Lossa, where he assumes the regal dignity, though he takes nothing upon him of the government, contenting himself with the honour, living quietly and peaceably, and leaving the care of the kingdom to another, who they call Deva, or Dena : which is the reason why they say there are two kings in Barautola."—*Churchill's Collections*, Vol. iv. p. 325.

This is the character of the Lama, who does pretty well for a pope of rude and savage Tartars, but is, in reality, an innocent and limited cheat, compared to the Lama of Rome ; who, like the other, is often stiled our Lord God the Pope, and like him receives adorations : but in pretensions to power and mischief, the other is a babe to him. Here an old crazy friar, avowedly subject to follies, diseases, and death, affects a power over heaven, earth, and hell ; and, though he cannot restore a lost finger, pretends to save or damn the souls of all mankind ; and to open and shut, at his pleasure, the gates of the upper and infernal worlds, though not a door in his own palace will lock or unlock at his command. He is so far from living peaceably, and not meddling with government, that he has made and murdered kings, claims a sovereignty over sovereigns, and has butchered, or caused to be butchered, a great part of the world, for the ambition of governing the rest. In the midst of his hypocrisy, impurities, and tyranny, he sets up for such infinite sanctity, that he has engrossed the word, is styled sanctity itself, and conveys (generally sells) saintship to all that have it. Hitherto he has not thought fit to canonize his own personal excrements. But the excrements of the dead, their rotten bones, dried flesh, their hair and nails, serve the same purpose, are as highly revered, and travel over the globe at a high price. And the putrid, perishing remains of the dead, who could not defend themselves from casualties, executions, and the common lot of nature are esteemed the guards and security of the the living. For the rest, the Lama's foot is as good as the Pope's toe ; and in grimace, pomp, the awe of sounds and appearances, his holiness still exceeds. Nor do we find that the Lama ever set his sanctified foot upon the necks of princes.

By this idea of these two monsters, it will appear which is the more frightful.

The fathers missionaries were greatly astonished, and pierced at the heart with the wild and nasty superstitions of the East India Pagans ; who, in some places, whenever a cow urines, run to that fountain to drink and wash, as an act of religion. Now, I would be glad to know of the reverend fathers, wherein the cow's holy water and theirs differ in cleanliness and efficacy ? Is theirs a stronger or a sweeter lee for the soul ; or does it more potently purify from sin ?

NUMBER 69.

The Hierarchy of Rome, how like that of Japan. The obvious Danger to a State from Popish Missionaries.

I HAVE, in my last, shewn the resemblance between the Pope of Rome, and him of Tartary. I shall not now enquire whether the domination of priests does not naturally end in a papacy ; in exalting one with blasphemous titles and pretensions over all the rest, and over all men ; or whether the popedom of Rome is not an improved copy of the popedom of barbarous Pagans ; but shall here draw from the history of Japan some passages and observations concerning its Pagan hierarchy, to which the Popish hierarchy bears so intimate a likeness.

The general name for the Japanese priests, is Bonzes. These profess to live in celibacy, and have laws forbidding them the use of women, as a thing filthy and detestable ; but they are allowed the use of boys as a practice holy and virtuous. They have a priestly sovereign, with uncontrollable authority over them all. He is an infallible judge in matters of religion, and makes unerring decisions about public and private worship, and about points necessary to be believed concerning the Deity ; without believing which, I presume he tells them they cannot be saved. This pontiff chooses and consecrates the paudes, a sort of ecclesiastics of quality, lower than himself, but higher than the bonzes, who resemble monks, as those do bishops.

They abstain from fish and flesh ; they shave their heads and beards ; and under the appearance of an austere life, conceal their debaucheries. A considerable branch of their revenue arises from burials ; and a very great one from the refreshments which they undertake, for large offerings, to procure to the souls of the dead, I suppose, by masses, penance, and conjuration. It is plain from hence, that they have a purgatory ; and the poor people, who have great faith in their power there, spare nothing to bribe the Bonzes, to release their friends out of it. These holy men have yet another high pious fetch to cheat their simple flocks, and enrich themselves ; they borrow money to be paid with great interest in the other world, and tell the lenders what a rare bargain they have.

There is however one good thing to be said of the monks of Japan ; and in it they differ as much from the Romish monks, as they agree with them in impurities and devout knavery. They are of twelve different sects, or religions, and each has full liberty to follow their own. They say, that the bodies of men may be a-kin, but their understandings know no kindred. This is to assert the natural independency of conscience, and even Christian charity ; to the infamy of such Christians, who will allow no man to have a conscience, unless he has their conscience ; which, by the character that in this they give of themselves, no honest man would choose to have.

The Bonzes and their superiors have amongst their deities dead men canonized : to these they pray and make offerings, (at the people's expense,) as the Popish Bonzes do their saints. These their artificia!

deities are so complaisant, that for the pronouncing of one word, they will save you. It is a principle amongst the divines of Japan, that by the single invocation of Nambuamidabuto, or by barely crying Forenguelio, you expiate all sorts of sin, and without repentance are in a state of salvation : an expeditious cut to heaven !

It puts me in mind of father Barry the Jesuit's book of easy devotions, quoted by Mr. Paschal in his provincial letters, and entitled, *Paradise opened to the lovers of holiness, by an hundred devotions to the mother of God, easy to be practised.* The following are some of the father's easy devotions : " To salute the blessed Virgin whenever you see her image : To say over ten *Ave Marias* for the pleasures of the Virgin : to give commission to the angels to do her reverence as from us : To wish one's self able to build her more churches than all kings and princes put together have built : To bid her good morrow every morning, and every evening good night : To say every day an *Ave Maria* in honour of the heart of Mary." He affirms this last to be so effectual, that the practiser of it may assure himself of the Virgin's heart. " Heart for heart, says he, were indeed but what ought to be ; but yours is haply too much taken up with the world, and is ever filled with the creature ; for which reason I dare not invite you to offer up immediately that little slave that you call your heart." Nay he offers devotion easier still, and as certain : such as " carrying about one a pair of beads, or a rosary, or some picture of the Virgin." These, or any of these, the father says, will certainly do the business, and he will be responsible for Mary. Do the Japanese doctors go beyond him ?

The chief opposition made to the missionaries in planting their religion in Japan, came from the Bonzes, not by reasoning or disputes, says Mr. Bayle, but by ways common with ecclesiastics. Here they forgot, or renounced their tolerating principle. They had recourse to the secular arm ; they animated the kings and people to maintain the old religion, to persecute the followers of the new ; and though they could not hinder the Christian religion from making a great progress in a little time, yet at last they worked up the Emperor to violences which drove it totally out of Japan, and well swelled the martyrology.

The abbot who wrote the history of the church of Japan, admires the depths of the judgments of God, and wonders that he suffered the blood of so many martyrs to be shed, without making it serve, as in the first ages of the church, for seed rising up fruitfully into new Christians. Mr. Bayle's reflection upon these words of the abbot is just : I shall give it at length.

Without taking liberty, says he, to search after the reasons which the wisdom of God may have to permit at one time what it permits not at another, one may say, that the Christianity of the sixteenth century had no right to hope for the same favour and protection from God, as the Christianity of the three first ages. This last was a benevolent religion, gentle, patient ; a religion which recommended to subjects submission to their sovereigns, and aspired not to an elevation over thrones by the means of rebellion. But the Christianity preached to the infidels of the sixteenth century was no longer such : It was a bloody, a murdering religion ; for five or six hundred years accustomed to carnage, she had contracted an inveterate habit of maintaining and ag-

grandizing herself by putting whatever opposed her to the point of the sword. Burning, butchering, the horrible tribunal of the inquisition, croisades, bulls exciting subjects to rebel, seditious preachers, conspiracies, assassinations of princes, were the ordinary means which she employed against those who submitted not to her injunctions. Ought this religion to promise herself the blessing vouchsafed to the primitive church, to the gospel of peace, of patience, and love? Conversion to the true God was the best choice that the Japanese could make; but wanting sufficient light to renounce their false religion, they had no other but that of practising persecution, or suffering it. They could neither preserve their ancient government nor religion, but by destroying the Christians, who sooner or later would have destroyed both. Whenever they had been able to make war, they would have armed all their pro-elytes, introduced foreign succours, and the cruel maxims of the Spaniards; and by the dint of killing and hanging, as in America, brought under their yoke all Japan. So that considering things in policy only, we must agree that the persecution suffered by the Christians there, was, in the course of measures, dictated by prudence, for preventing the overthrow of the monarchy, and the ravage of a whole state. The ingenuity of a certain Spaniard justifies the precautions of those infidels, and furnished the Bonzes with a specious pretence for discharging their hatred, and soliciting the extirpation of Christians: when asked by the king of Possa, how the king of Spain was become master of such a mighty extent of dominions in each hemisphere, he answered with too much simplicity, "That he sent missionaries to preach the gospel to strange nations; and after having converted a good number of Pagans, he sent his troops, who joining the new Christians, subdued the country." This indiscretion cost the Christians dear.

NUMBER 70.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker.

Cler. I am glad of this opportunity of talking with you. It was what I wanted.

Qua. And why didst thee not take it before? I never shunned thee.

Cler. I am your minister: it became you to come to me.

Qua. I promise thee, thou art none of my minister; I'll have none but of my own choosing. Besides, if thou mindest thy pride more than my salvation, and art too great to come to thy parishioners, ~~small~~ is my encouragement to come to thee: the apostles stood not ~~th~~ upon their dignity.

Cler. The apostles went to those who could not come to them.

Qua. And to those that would not.

er. A modest man would have doubted, and heard what I had
y.

ia. Friend, hast thou thyself no doubts about the straitness of the
that thou art in?

er. Certainly, no.

ia. Then am I more modest than thou art. I often doubt, and go
od with my doubts.

er. But you should go to him in a proper way.

ia. I seek him by prayer, and endeavour to understand his will
the scriptures of truth. Knowest thou a more proper way?

er. Do you understand the holy scriptures?

ia. It is thy fault, and the fault of thy brethren, if I do not. The
y have translated them.

er. But there are still many difficult places in them which the
y understand best.

ia. If the clergy understand them, then are they not difficult to
en who know languages: and why do not the clergy explain
?

er. That is their business.

ia. Then they ill understand their business, since they vary and
el so much about it.

er. They only differ in controverted points.

ia. No more don't thee and I.

er. But I mean points controverted amongst us.

ia. That is to say, all points. Even where you say you believe,
, you explain differently; which sheweth a manifest difference
n believing. And art not thou unreasonable to expect, nay, to de-
union amongst the people, when the clergy themselves are the au-
of disunion?

er. Therefore we renounce such clergymen.

ia. And they renounce thee. And do not the Quakers act wisely
nounce you all as you all do one another?

er. You speak harshly, and untruly: There are numbers of us who
e together in our sentiments.

ia. And there are numbers who adhere together against you, and
all themselves of the same church with you.

er. I am sorry for it.

a. So aughtest thou to be for charging me with speaking untruly,
thou thyself bearest testimony to the truth which I speak.

er. But you go too far.

a. I do not, nay, I will go farther, and maintain, that the num-
thou boastest of in union with thee, were every man to explain
elief his own way, would all vary from thee, and from one an-

er. I do not think so: however, their varying in belief is no
n for believing.

a. But it is a good reason why every man should have his own

er. Then there will be no end of confusions.

a. No more there is not in opinions and doctrines.

er. And is not that a deplorable case?

a. So is the fall of Adam: canst thou cure it?

Cler. They are not parallel cases.

Qua. Depend upon it, thou may'st as easily bring back Adam into a state of innocence, as all his posterity into one mind.

Cler. What, can't I reason a man into my opinion ?

Qua. Yes, if he like thy opinion, and thy reasoning : Perhaps he will think them both stark naught.

Cler. That may be his fault.

Qua. And it may be thine. How are thy opinions better than mine ? I think them worse.

Cler. They are warranted by the holy Scriptures.

Qua. I think mine are : I'll promise thee I'll try them by the Scriptures, which I think I can interpret as well as thou can'st. I'll tell thee further, that I am satisfied the God of mercy never damned any man for mistaking it ; for I take it, that in revealing his word he mocketh not men, by giving them a riddle instead of a revelation.

Cler. You know little of Scripture, if you do not know that there are in it places which you cannot understand.

Qua. Nor can'st thou. As to those places, though they may be his will, yet I am sure they are not his revealed will, because he hath not revealed it ; and if I take thy interpretation and conjectures for his word, then do I believe in thy word, and not in his. Now, where hath he commanded me to believe in thee ?

Cler. He has commanded you to believe me, when I speak in his name.

Qua. And so art thou to believe me when I speak in his name.

Cler. But I am his ambassador.

Qua. There I do not believe thee, because thou speakest in thy own name.

Cler. Why, does not St. Paul say, we are ambassadors in his stead ?

Qua. Yes ; art thou Paul ?

Cler. No, I am only his successor : he himself is dead.

Qua. So are his gifts and miracles : canst thou work miracles ? If not, how dost thou succeed him ?

Cler. I preach the gospel which he preached.

Qua. So do I, and bear my own charges as he did his ; and why should I pay thee for doing what I can do as well myself ? I do not find that Paul has left thee any wages, and I am sure he has left thee nothing else ; his epistles are left to every man.

Cler. Yes, he has left ministers to wait upon God's ordinances in the house of God. I am one of those ministers.

Qua. Friend, as thou art a Christian, thou must needs know that every house is alike to Almighty God, who filleth heaven and earth and dwelleth not in houses made with hands. And as to what you say of ordinances, thou knowest that the apostles administered none. Every man did it for himself, and it was done from house to house. There were no bloody sacrifices in the religion of Jesus, and consequently priests, their only office being to slay beasts.

Cler. Dare you say that God has appointed no body in his church to preach and explain his word ?

Qua. No ; I neither do nor dare say it ; and thou may'st spare big words. He hath left every man to preach it to another ; nor can it appear that thou hast any more call from him than every one of

parish bath. If thou wouldest resemble the apostles, go and preach to the unconverted without money, and without price. Thy whole parish believe in Christ already, as much as thou doest, and did before they knew thee. They have the Bible themselves ; and if thou bringest them any tidings that are not in it, and that they themselves see not in it, they ought not to believe thee.

Cler. You argue very insincerely with me. Just now you contended that I had none of St. Paul's gifts ; and now you would have me go without those gifts, and do what he did with them ; namely, travel over the world, and convert the unconverted.

Qua. No, I only would shew thee, that as thou dost not resemble him, thou art vain in pretending to succeed him ; and so far I reason consistently, as thou dost weakly, if thou claimest all his reverence without any of his merit.

Cler. I do not set up for the abilities of St. Paul ; but still have qualifications superior to laymen.

Qua. What are those qualifications ?

Cler. I know languages ; I have had an university education ; and——

Qua. All these are civil qualifications, common to all men, who would be at the pains and charge. Laymen understand Latin and Greek as well as thou dost. The gospel wanteth no embellishment from those whom thou callest Virgil and Horace ; and Christ crucified, is not sought nor found in universities, nor indeed the flesh crucified. If I am not misinformed, they abound with young men who are too often sinners, and with old men who are no saints. They are schools of words ; but the gospel hath nothing to do with thy logic and vain philosophy.

Cler. I was going to tell you too, that I have studied divinity.

Qua. Knowest thou any divinity but what is in the Bible ? and have not I the Bible ? I think, and am sure, that it is a plain and intelligible book, at least as much of it as is meet for a Christian, and to turn it into doubtfulness, and disputation, and science, and gain, savoureth not of Christianity.

Cler. This is insolently said : who turns it into gain ?

Qua. He who maketh a gain of it ; which is worse than insolence, whereof thou dost groundlessly accuse me.

Cler. What, do you not declare against preachers ?

Qua. I have already told thee, I do not : I would have all men preachers.

Cler. Ay, tinkers, and taylor, and cobblers.

Qua. Friend, beware of thy words : what were the apostles ? They were no university gentry.

Cler. But you say that we want the apostles' gifts.

Qua. I wish thou couldest confute me. However, we have all of us the apostles' books ; and can'st thou mend them ?

Cler. No : but I can enforce them ; and the labourer is worthy of his hire, if you will believe St. Paul.

Qua. But if he laboureth for himself, why should I pay him ; I profit not by thy labour ; why should'st thou profit by my substance. I believe Paul ; but Paul hath given thee no property in my pigs and barley.

Cler. But the law has.

Qua. The law is not Paul's. But I perceive, whoever is the giver, thou wilt be the taker.

Cler. Sir, you are rude.

Qua. How? Because I do thee justice.

Cler. Let me tell you, sir, there is reason in it, as well as law.

Qua. Thy interest may be reason to thee: but thou wilt be put to it, to give me a reason for giving thee something for nothing.

Cler. Don't you know that under the law, the priests had their lot in the land?

Qua. Yes: But they were Jewish priests, or sacrificers. Art thou a Jew? and dost thou kill cattle as they did? and would'st thou reconcile Judaism to Christianity?

Cler. No; I would only shew that it is reasonable that priests should have a proper appointment.

Qua. I have already shewn thee the unreasonableness of having any priests in Christianity.

Cler. In this you saucily differ from all the societies of Christians in the world.

Qua. I do not differ from Christianity; nor am I saucy in differing from those that do. The blessed Jesus hath left thee no legacy, that I know of, nor so much as named thee in his will.

Cler. The man grows profane.

Qua. Thou meanest unanswerable. Is it any article of thy creed, that truth is profane?

Cler. Your having no established ministers amongst you, is enough to render your sect odious to all sorts of Christians.

Qua. We have religion established amongst us. Is religion odious in the eyes, where there is not a livelihood to be got out of it? We establish no clergy, lest they should disestablish the peace and purity of the gospel; and whilst our preachers are under the influence of the Holy Spirit, we reckon they will seek no money. We therefore do not keep in pay men who sell speech.

Cler. The truth is, the speeches uttered amongst you are not worth buying.

Qua. Friend, no speeches in the house of God ought to be bought, nor the tabernacle be turned into a shop. Why sellest thou thine, which, as report saith, are not alluring? Freely you have received, freely give. Friend, what did the gospel cost thee? or why should we purchase it at thy dear price, when we have it in our houses in more purity and plainness than thou can'st give it?

Cler. Yes, and you understand it by the Spirit.

Qua. Thou sayest it. We trust to the Spirit to direct us, who is promised to all that ask him. Thou trusteth to Henry Hammond and Daniel Whitby for direction. Whether art thou or we best directed?

Cler. I shall not believe that the Spirit is the author of the enthusiasm and dreams that are found amongst you.

Qua. "The carnal man discerneth not the things of God." Paul was called a babbler by the Athenians, whose priests, who were many, had no illumination, but being men of dark and voluptuous minds, and

feeding upon sacrifices and offerings, preferred Bacchus and his grapes to the spirit of Christ.

Cler. The comparison you would insinuate is impudent and profane.

Qua. Friend, meekness becometh a preacher. Thou hast the passion of a priest, but not the meekness of a minister of the gospel. Why dost thou fall upon me with bitter words, for telling thee a fact which, in answer to thee, it was necessary to tell. Is it profane to say that the heathen clergy took offerings? Nay, since thou dost urge me, dost not thou take offerings? and did the apostles take any? I have put thee between these priests and the apostles, that by comparing thyself with both, thou may'st see whom thou resemblest most.

Cler. If this be not profaneness, I know not what is.

Qua. The profaneness is not on my side.

Cler. Let me inform you, sir, that for this language, in some countries, you would have your tongue cut out of your head.

Qua. I know it; and praise God that I am not in those countries, and that thou can'st not bring those countries hither. It is plain that thou approvest their barbarity, else why dost thou think it due to me? I beg thou wouldst not be provoked, if I mention to thee once more the example of the apostles: where did they justify savageness and severity to any man for any opinion, or any words? where did they ever talk to Pagans as thou dost to me, who am a Christian, and endeavour to possess the temper of the gospel?

Cler. Yes, you have a form of godliness: but——

Qua. Friend, in the first place, judge not; and secondly, beware what thou sayest against forms, for thy own sake.

Cler. I say, if your preachers had power, they would quickly find texts for persecution.

Qua. I guess thou judgest by thyself; and thou judgest well. We know it; and therefore give them no power, nor the sinews of power. Pride and impatience are inseparable from it: it destroyeth all humility, and maketh men imperious, and persecutors. Why are the Popish priests more cruel and mischievous than Protestant priests, but because they have more power? And why is the pope the most mischievous of all priests, but because he hath most power?

Cler. You carry every thing too far. Preachers of the gospel ought to be kept above contempt.

Qua. Friend, they who are rich in spiritual things, want no other riches to save them from contempt; and they who are rich without these, ought to be contemned. Riches may render them formidable; but piety only, and a holy conversation, can make them revered. Revenues do not place them above contempt, but only encourage them to despise the people. The poverty of the apostles was great part of their glory.

NUMBER 71.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker, continued.

Cler. Of all people I think the Quakers have the least pretence to glory in their poverty.

Qua. Thou seemest in this to aim at being severe, but I feel it not. Our moderate wealth is the effect of our honest industry, and we are not ashamed of it.

Cler. As well you might, if you got it by your preaching.

Qua. I do not find that thou art ashamed, and yet thy income is great this way.

Cler. Then you make comparisons ?

Qua. Assuredly, no ; thy motives and ours are not akin.

Cler. I warrant you preach by the Spirit.

Qua. How preachest thou ? by the sheet ?

Cler. I read my sermons, to avoid incoherences.

Qua. Thou needest not, hadst thou the Spirit it would help thy infirmities.

Cler. Does the Spirit help you to your low language, and your silly repetitions ?

Qua. If repetitions are silly, why shuttest not thou thy Common-Prayer Book, which aboundeth therein ? And as to your language, if the Spirit were a dealer in style, why doth Paul write such bad Greek, as the learned say ? But I can tell thee, we have many men amongst us, who preach in as decent language, and as free from tautologies, as any that thou canst read out of thy note-book. I could mention the different efficacy too, and the manifest disinterestedness of our preachers — but I spare thee.

Cler. Spare me ! I fear you not.

Qua. Why, truly nor I thee, since thou defiest me. I have found thee no terrible adversary, which may not be the fault of the man. Thy bishop would not do better, though his pay is greater.

Cler. It is too true, he could not : reason is thrown away upon you, — and such as you.

Qua. To deal freely with thee, as I am not the richer, so neither art thou the poorer, for any reason thou hast thrown away upon me.

Cler. Where men pretend to the Spirit, it is in vain to argue with them.

Qua. Then why dost thou ? But especially why floutest thou the Spirit ?

Cler. I hope there is a wide difference between the Spirit of God and the spirit of enthusiasm.

Qua. Doubtless there is ; but I would be glad to hear thee explain the difference.

Cler. The same difference as between a good understanding and a wild hot imagination.

Qua. Thy words sound well, but thy reasoning is naught. Is not the gospel above the best understanding ? and was it not to the Greek

philosophers foolishness? They had as much sense as thou or thy bishop, and knew their own language better; but could not comprehend the incarnation and crucifixion of Christ the Lord, nor original sin and the resurrection. The light of the Spirit hath therefore no analogy with the natural understanding; as you yourselves contend, when you would confute or punish people for following their reason, and departing from your systems. I must tell thee too, that the Spirit warmeth both the heart and the imagination; for which cause Festus reckoned Paul mad, and the first Christians sought martyrdom. And if——

Cler. Be shorter; we see you can preach.

Qua. If I do, 'tis truth without tythes, and can but half offend thee.

Cler. Mighty witty! I just mentioned preaching, and presently thythes must be brought in for company.

Qua. Why, dost thou like them asunder?

Cler. Fiddle faddle, what has all this to do with enthusiasm?

Qua. Nothing; and wherefore didst thou begin it? I have shown thee thy weak reasoning about enthusiasm: What sayest thou in answer?

Cler. That the Quakers are enthusiasts.

Qua. And givest no reason. Is it thus thou convincest gainsayers, and edifiest thy flock?

Cler. My flock won't come to you for edification.

Qua. It is well for thee that they do not. But to keep thee to the point, if I can; I tell thee, that we are no enthusiasts, and I will give thee a reason: We pretend to no more of the Spirit than influences or actions, and our actions are sober and rational. Hast thou found me the speech and wild behaviour of an enthusiast?

Cler. You have no ill knack at prating.

Qua. Friend, my prating costeth no man any thing.

Cler. Though 'tis enriched with the Spirit.

Qua. I thank thee; thou givest a reason why it should cost nothing. The Spirit is not bought nor sold, nor are the works of the Spirit: therefore he neither receives fees, nor claimeth dues. Simon Magus, who traded in conjuration and spells, was profanely for making a commodity of the Holy Ghost, and offered money for him, doubtless with design to make more. Thou knowest his doom; and yet, friend, there are many Simon Magus's in the world; yea, worse than Simon Magus. There be many who raise great revenues out of the Spirit; and have him not.

Cler. Who goes from the point now?

Qua. I do not. I feared thou wouldest think me too much in the point. We were speaking of the Spirit.

Cler. Which you think you have. How do you know it?

Qua. There is but one way. I feel him.

Cler. But how shall I be satisfied of that?

Qua. The same way; thou must first feel him too.

Cler. So say all the enthusiasts in the world.

Qua. Friend, are all who have the Spirit enthusiasts?

Cler. No.

Qua. How dost thee distinguish?

Cler. By their works.

Qua. Thou sayest well. Now by what work of ours do we appear to be enthusiasts ? We are sober in society, sober in our families : we fear God, and have an awful reverence for his name and power, and for this we continually read the Scriptures which testify of him ; inso-much that, for this our love to the Bible, some of thy brethren laugh us to scorn, and scoffingly say, that we are Bible-mad. We fast and we pray in private, and preach and pray in our religious assemblies, and we have universal charity. We open our purses cheerfully for the support of the public ; we are dutiful subjects, and meddle not in factions ; we maintain all our own poor, and contribute not the less to thine ; and even the clergy have part of our substance. Seest thou in this true character the marks of enthusiasm ?

Cler. You indeed maintain a fair outside.

Qua. Canst thou see farther ?

Cler. I can see your ghostly hummings and haw-ings.

Qua. Is it not as easy for thee to call them sighs and groans, which cannot be uttered ; whereof thou must have read, but seemest not to understand ?

Cler. Why, who can understand the use of your silent meetings ?

Qua. We do, and thou mayest. Friend, our devotion and holy exercises are not taken out of a book, but begin first at the heart ; and when the heart dictateth not, we speak not. Our godliness is not performed like a play, by rehearsal.

Cler. This is a villainous reflexion upon the Common-Prayer.

Qua. Thou makest it then. I am only defending the religious worship of the people called Quakers ; and I have defended it. I do not revile thy church exercise : why revilest thou me ?

Cler. Who are they that perform their devotion by rehearsal, like a play ?

Qua. We do not : and is it not lawful to say, we do not ? Knowest thou any that do ?

Cler. We have a form of prayers, the best that ever was composed, and find great devotion in it.

Qua. I rejoice in it : I like all devotion that is paid to God, and warranted by the Scriptures. I find no fault with thine ; only it is not meet for me, who find more fervency in my own, and more edification. And what is the end of devotion but edification ?

Cler. Yes, the glory of God.

Qua. God is not glorified, where men are not edified. Hence every man must glorify God his own way.

Cler. What, in an erroneous way ?

Qua. Those are words. No man errs who pleases God : who is, doubtless, pleased with our best endeavours to please him. Knowest thou any better rule ?

Cler. Yes, the rule of certainty.

Qua. This is certainty. Other certainty than this is not found amongst men, who must all answer for themselves ; and therefore must all worship God, as each thinks best.

Cler. Which would introduce a thorough anarchy in worship.

Qua. So there is in faces : and what harm ensueth ? God made faces different : canst thou make them uniform ?

; but minds are different from faces. They may be altering.

metimes for the worse, as well as the better; and so may
ered by good or bad keeping. But thou mayest depend
nds will always vary as infinitely as faces; and for ought I
s, as their substance is more delicate and quick, and know-
icular figure and dimensions.

ere is, however, no harm in reasoning with them.

oncur with thee, if that reasoning be free from deceit, the
thing to violence, which ought never to be employed about
hich it can never change.

it in case of obstinacy and disobedience, what remedy is

me. God only can judge the heart; which he only can
mayest think me obstinate: but I declare sincerely I am
ou in charity oughtest to believe me. If thou dost not,
a good Christian; and if thou wouldest punish me, thou
stian. I do not think that thou art obstinate, and adherest
which thou dislikest; and I would not hurt a hair of thy
not though I thought thee obstinate.

is is plausibly said: but God keep me out of thy power.
lesire not to have thee in my power: I know the frailty of
re, and the deceitfulness of power, which perhaps I might
herefore I would neither have thee in mine, nor be myself
o thine.

y, but you are only a private man.

riend, all Christians, as Christians, are private men. There
igh nor low in Christianity, but in the degrees of Christian
; and to found dominion in grace, is indeed fanaticism, as the
heir disputes with the Presbyterians, have justly called it.

y, but they meant civil power.

owest thou any power in society but civil power?

es, certainly, power ecclesiastical.

hat to do?

o coerce and punish offenders against the laws of the church.

bat, in their bodies and property?

ithout doubt.

nd is not this manifest civil power?

es, in its effect.

en it is in effect, and in truth, and entirely civil power,
stianity is a stranger unto; and which is an enemy to Chris-
en it meddleth therewith.

ow, are we not all subject to the laws of the church?

o the laws of Christ, if thou pleasest; my conscience know-
r master. Doth thine?

o. But my conscience tells me that there ought to be spi-
nors in the church.

overnors are masters; and the conscience cannot be mas-

hat, not directed?

by direction thou meanest instruction, this hath no relation
ect. And all men that can instruct, ought to instruct.

Cler. What, without a call ?

Qua. To be able, is a sufficient call ; and no call sufficient without ability.

Cler. But who shall judge of that call ?

Qua. He who hath it, and they to whom he ministereth.

Cler. The common people are rare judges !

Qua. The commonest man is a good judge, whether he be edified by his preacher, or not.

Cler. Perhaps they are both enthusiasts.

Qua. They may be pious Christians for all that ; if their affections be good towards God, they will certainly be saved.

Cler. Nay, I don't wonder at your charity for enthusiasts : it is but natural.

Qua. I have charity for all men, as every true Christian hath, even for thee. Art thou an enthusiast ?

Cler. No : I am a member of the church of Christ.

Qua. Shew it by thy charity. Thou hast neither charity nor understanding if thou wouldest exclude all enthusiasts from Christ's church.

Cler. They exclude themselves.

Qua. Thy censure is passionate and cruel. No man chooseth to be an enthusiast, nor knows that he is. Wouldest thou damn him for invincible weakness ?

Cler. What shall I do with him, if he will not be reclaimed ?

Qua. That is part of his weakness, and thou hast nothing to do with him. What wouldest thou have to do, where thou canst do nothing ? Those who have conscience, know that it is not to be commanded nor plied.

Cler. A whipping-post has sometimes worked great cures that way.

Qua. Upon hypocrites. Dost thou reckon conscience an evil ? and would a whipping-post cure thee of thine ?

Cler. You are an unmannerly fellow.

Qua. Would that were the worst I could say of thee !

Cler. Sir, what can you say of me ?

Qua. What I will not say. I do not like thy example so well as to follow it ; nor will I fulfil the character that thou givest of me. I will only assure thee, that thou art not qualified to rebuke unmannerly language ; and that for myself, I would rather want breeding than charity.

Cler. I perceive my censure of your brethren, the enthusiasts, touches you.

Qua. With compassion for thee, who art the greatest enthusiast that I ever met with.

Cler. Hey day ! Mr. Pert ; what, is your head turned ?

Qua. I am going to shew thee that thine is : for reasoning hath no manner of effect upon thee ; and thou reckonest every man who is out of thy favour, to be moreover out of the favour of God. All which is manifest enthusiasm, and the worst part of enthusiasm, the enthusiasm of monks and dervises, of bigots and persecutors of all sides and sorts.

Cler. Thou art a very merry fellow.

Qua. I am not merry. Thou makest me melancholy to see such an anti-christian spirit in thee.

Cler. Are you really in earnest, when you charge me with enthusiasm ?

Qua. Thou chargest thyself, by declaring for persecution ; a crime against the very essence of Christianity. If thou art not an enthusiast, thou art worse.

Cler. Why, I tell you, I am an enemy to enthusiasts.

Qua. In that very thing thou art one. Thou art an enthusiast against enthusiasm. If enthusiasts hurt not thee, why shouldest thou be their enemy ?

Cler. I am sure you talk like a wild enthusiast.

Qua. So thou sayest, but thou provest nothing. I talk against persecution.

Cler. To punish disobedience to our spiritual governors, is, forsooth, persecution !

Qua. I thought I had already shewn thee the vanity of thy language about spiritual governors, which words contradict each other. None but God can govern the spirit of man. All government amongst men is human government, which meddleth only with the peace and property of society. When it would controul the consciences of men, it invadeth the jurisdiction, and usurps the prerogative of the Almighty, and is guilty of persecution.

Cler. But don't you disturb the peace of the church, which is part of the government ?

Qua. We ourselves are part of the church of Christ, and give no disturbance to the rest ; and if thy pride be disturbed at our Christian liberty, the scripture condemneth thee. We cannot, as we are Christians sacrifice our conscience to any man's ambition. Can a peaceable compliance with private conscience disturb any man who hath the Spirit of Christ ? The business of religion is to find a way to heaven. Art thou disturbed because I choose that which appears the shortest, and which to me is the only comfortable way ?

Cler. But if you be in a wrong way, and I would compel you into the right way ; I do you no injury, but real service.

Qua. Friend, hast thou ever been there ? And have not I the same written directions from the inspired men of God as thou hast, about the length and difficulty of the road ? If thou wouldest take my divine rules for travelling out of my hand, or force thyself upon me for a guide, and drive me into a road which I do not find in my book, and make me pay for all this ; I shall suspect thee for mine enemy, and for a freebooter, who wouldest carry me out of the way into a wilderness, to rob me. Let me ask thee a question, Wouldest thou be compelled to accompany me in my journey heavenward ?

Cler. No, faith, for two unanswerable reasons : First, you are not going thither.

Qua. I dare neither think nor say the like of thee : only thy road is not my road.

Cler. Secondly, you have no warrant to compel me.

Qua. Thou speakest truth. No man hath a warrant to force faith, or to carry another man's conscience.

NUMBER 72.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker, continued.

Cler. But you allow me a right to direct conscience.

Qua. Yes, if it liketh thy direction. I have the same right.

Cler. You have self-conceit in abundance.

Qua. When thou art free from it, thy rebuke may be seasonable. I think I have impartiality too: my religion bringeth me no rents, I only seek salvation from it.

Cler. Smart again.

Qua. Dost thou feel it?

Cler. If I do, I ought to bear it, you know, from a teacher.

Qua. I wish thou wert one. I am sure thou hast hitherto taught me nothing. I have fully confuted all thy propositions, and thou hast not answered mine.

Cler. You are too wise a man to be confuted or convinced.

Qua. By thy arguments, undoubtedly.

Cler. By any arguments.

Qua. That are insufficient.

Cler. In short, you are the most incorrigible sect living.

Qua. And art not thou vain to endeavour to correct what thou sayest cannot be corrected?

Cler. I would, at least, do my duty and save your soul, if I could.

Qua. My soul is safe in the blood of Christ. Knowest thou any other safety?

Cler. Your safety will fail you, if you do not worship him in a proper manner.

Qua. I believe in him, I pray to him, and to God through him: I pray for his Spirit, I seek his will in his word, and beg for light to understand it, and praise him for it; and I live soberly. Is not this the whole of religion, and of religious worship? Canst thou teach me any better?

Cler. If you were to be taught, I could teach you to worship him decently.

Qua. Thou meanest, I suppose, to bow at sounds, to make legs to a table, and to say after thee. This is not religious worship, but a task which any Infidel can perform; nay, we have creatures amongst us that are not rational, and yet can perform it.

Cler. Was there ever such profane buffoonery?

Qua. Why truly I think not.

Cler. None but a pagan could jest thus with sacred things.

Qua. Thou art mistaken, friend; pagans reckon them sacred, and solemnized in their temples a number of merry motions, which were a jest to the primitive Christians.

Cler. Good things are not the worse for being abused by the heathens.

Qua. True, nor foolish things the wiser for being used by Christians.

Cler. What, do you call the ceremonies of our holy church foolish?

Qua. No, but to me they are not edifying.

Cler. To me they are, but your heart is hardened.

Qua. Do not things that are edifying soften the heart? Else what are they good for?

Cler. Grace must go along with them.

Qua. Friend, won't grace do without ceremonies? Whoever hath grace, is already edified: And cannot I pray for grace without ceremonies?

Cler. Our church has established them as necessary to decency and edification. Has the authority of the church no weight with you?

Qua. Yes, great weight, where she erreth not.

Cler. Of which you pretend to judge.

Qua. Dost thou follow any church without knowing why? or should any man?

Cler. No.

Qua. Then every man ought to judge of every church, as thou dost; by separating from every church but thy own; doubtless, because thou art most edified by her: and when she edifieth me also, I will also join with her.

Cler. You ought to join with her: she is the established church.

Qua. If ours were established, wouldest thou join with us?

Cler. How! I join with fanatics!

Qua. It becometh not me to return ill language; but it is plain that thou valuest not establishments; and why wouldest thou expect it from others, and set up duty against conscience?

Cler. Conscience! cant!

Qua. By our conscience we must please God; but if it offendeth thee, I will call it by another name; I will call it opinion. Now, suppose I differ in opinion with thee and thy church, wouldest thou have me be an insincere man, a hypocrite, and a liar, by declaring myself of thy opinion, when I am not?

Cler. No, but——

Qua. Have patience: I have another question to put to thee—— Wouldest thou have me change my mind, when I cannot change it?

Cler. No man shall tell me that it is impossible for him to be of the true religion.

Qua. I am of the true religion, and so thinks every man; it being every man's nearest interest to be of the best.

Cler. A medley of religions is pernicious to society.

Qua. Pernicious (if thou pleasest) to the pride of men, who would ride upon society over the belly of conscience. But what hath human society to do with what is in the heart of man concerning a future state, wherewith there can be no human commerce? Human society indeed should beware of those men who, under colour of conducting them to the other world, would engross this; of men who would make the whole body politic their slaves and tenants; and would take so much care of postures and opinions, as to leave them nothing but postures and opinions to take care of.

Cler. A fine harangue, truly! Who are the terrible fellows that do or would do all this?

Qua. All who would bear no religion in the world but their own. The Popish clergy have done it; and all other clergy, who make the

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Qua. Pernicious (if thou pleasest) to the pride of men, who would ride upon society over the belly of conscience. But what hath human society to do with what is in the heart of man concerning a future state, wherewith there can be no human commerce? Human society indeed should beware of those men who, under colour of conducting them to the other world, would engross this; of men who would make the whole body politic their slaves and tenants; and would take so much care of postures and opinions, as to leave them nothing but postures and opinions to take care of.

Cler. A fine harangue, truly! Who are the terrible fellows that do or would do all this?

Qua. All who would bear no religion in the world but their own. The Popish clergy have done it; and all other clergy, who make the

NUMBER 72.

Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker, continued.

Cler. But you allow me a right to direct conscience.

Qua. Yes, if it liketh thy direction. I have the same right.

Cler. You have self-conceit in abundance.

Qua. When thou art free from it, thy rebuke may be seasonable. I think I have impartiality too: my religion bringeth me no rents, I only seek salvation from it.

Cler. Smart again.

Qua. Dost thou feel it?

Cler. If I do, I ought to bear it, you know, from a teacher.

Qua. I wish thou wert one. I am sure thou hast hitherto taught me nothing. I have fully confuted all thy propositions, and thou hast not answered mine.

Cler. You are too wise a man to be confuted or convinced.

Qua. By thy arguments, undoubtedly.

Cler. By any arguments.

Qua. That are insufficient.

Cler. In short, you are the most incorrigible sect living.

Qua. And art not thou vain to endeavour to correct what thou sayest cannot be corrected?

Cler. I would, at least, do my duty and save your soul, if I could.

Qua. My soul is safe in the blood of Christ. Knowest thou any other safety?

Cler. Your safety will fail you, if you do not worship him in a proper manner.

Qua. I believe in him, I pray to him, and to God through him: I pray for his Spirit, I seek his will in his word, and beg for light to understand it, and praise him for it; and I live soberly. Is not this the whole of religion, and of religious worship? Canst thou teach me any better?

Cler. If you were to be taught, I could teach you to worship him decently.

Qua. Thou meanest, I suppose, to bow at sounds, to make legs to a table, and to say after thee. This is not religious worship, but a task which any Infidel can perform; nay, we have creatures amongst us that are not rational, and yet can perform it.

Cler. Was there ever such profane buffoonery?

Qua. Why truly I think not.

Cler. None but a pagan could jest thus with sacred things.

Qua. Thou art mistaken, friend; pagans reckon them sacred, and solemnized in their temples a number of merry motions, which were a jest to the primitive Christians.

Cler. Good things are not the worse for being abused by the heathens.

Qua. True, nor foolish things the wiser for being used by Christians.

Cler. What, do you call the ceremonies of our holy church foolish?

Qua. No, but to me they are not edifying.

Cler. To me they are, but your heart is hardened.

Qua. Do not things that are edifying soften the heart ? Else what are they good for ?

Cler. Grace must go along with them.

Qua. Friend, won't grace do without ceremonies ? Whoever hath grace, is already edified : And cannot I pray for grace without ceremonies ?

Cler. Our church has established them as necessary to decency and edification. Has the authority of the church no weight with you ?

Qua. Yes, great weight, where she erreth not.

Cler. Of which you pretend to judge.

Qua. Dost thou follow any church without knowing why ? or should any man ?

Cler. No.

Qua. Then every man ought to judge of every church, as thou dost ; by separating from every church but thy own ; doubtless, because thou art most edified by her : and when she edifieth me also, I will also join with her.

Cler. You ought to join with her : she is the established church.

Qua. If ours were established, wouldest thou join with us ?

Cler. How ! I join with fanatics !

Qua. It becometh not me to return ill language ; but it is plain that thou valuest not establishments ; and why wouldest thou expect it from others, and set up duty against conscience ?

Cler. Conscience ! cant !

Qua. By our conscience we must please God ; but if it offendeth thee, I will call it by another name ; I will call it opinion. Now, suppose I differ in opinion with thee and thy church, wouldest thou have me be an insincere man, a hypocrite, and a liar, by declaring myself of thy opinion, when I am not ?

Cler. No, but——

Qua. Have patience : I have another question to put to thee—— Wouldest thou have me change my mind, when I cannot change it ?

Cler. No man shall tell me that it is impossible for him to be of the true religion.

Qua. I am of the true religion, and so thinks every man ; it being every man's nearest interest to be of the best.

Cler. A medley of religions is pernicious to society.

Qua. Pernicious (if thou pleasest) to the pride of men, who would ride upon society over the belly of conscience. But what hath human society to do with what is in the heart of man concerning a future state, wherewith there can be no human commerce ? Human society indeed should beware of those men who, under colour of conducting them to the other world, would engross this ; of men who would make the whole body politic their slaves and tenants ; and would take so much care of postures and opinions, as to leave them nothing but postures and opinions to take care of.

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Cler. A fine harangue, truly! Who are the terrible fellows that do so?

Qua. All who would bear no religion in the world but their own. The Popish clergy have done it; and all other clergy, who make the

same demands upon society that they do, would do it. Do not all thy high brethren make the same demands, and contend for all the tyranny, and wealth, and pomp of popery ?

Cler. I am not for Popery : But I am for the church's having all her own power and lands.

Qua. That is, thou art for the worst parts of popery, but not for popery. Friend, religion claimeth neither power nor lands : our Saviour had none, the apostles had none, and we claim none ; and we interfere with society, as they do who demand every thing, and good in society.

Cler. A pretty fellow to regulate society !

Qua. I meddle not with society : I only desire

Cler. What have you to do then with church ?

Qua. Nothing. What hast thou ? They have ruined society by the popish monks.—Art thou one ? At the Reformation the laity reclaimed them again : and doth the church of Christ condemn the reformation ? or, what hath she to do with the cheats and robberies of monks, but to condemn them ?

Cler. I hope you will allow us to keep what the law gives us.

Qua. But why claimeth thou more ? And hath not the law that gave, a power to take away ?

Cler. I dare say, you don't mean your own estate.

Qua. Yes, surely, if I robbed the public to get it, or turned the bounty of the public to the public detriment.

Cler. Have you the impudence to say that the clergy do so ?

Qua. Friend, there are clergy who do so ; who for their own pride and debaucheries starve the laity that feed their luxury ; who receive all their power and revenues from the laity, and leave the laity none. And there are others who have great benefices for the exercise of religious functions, and never exercise any ; but convert them into *Sine Curas*, or leave them to a hireling. This, friend, is worse than impudence, whereof I am not guilty. Does the Spirit call them to this ? for, if am not deceived, you all declare yourselves called by the Spirit.

Cler. I know you are nibbling at our keeping curates, and yet you keep a bailiff upon your estate.

Qua. Yes ; and I will turn him out, if he neglect my affairs, or turn them to a carter. How dost thou like the example ? It is of thy own choosing. And thou puttest the cure of precious souls, for which Christ died, upon the same foot with the care of corn and cattle, which men eat ; and upon a worse foot, if thou wilt not suffer us to choose our spiritual bailiffs.

Cler. And so you would have the same authority over clergymen, and over your ploughmen. Mighty civil !

Qua. We maintain both, but at very unequal wages. Where would I be the incivility or injustice of laying out our own money for our own use ?

Cler. Then the church might starve for you ?

Qua. Friend, thou mayest be learned, but thou art very ignorant. The church of Christ cannot starve, because it liveth not upon meats, and drink, and money.

Cler. Nor consists of solemn faces, prim cravats, plain coats, and broad hats.

Qua. Thou speakest truth, notwithstanding thy intention.

Cler. Then why are you singular in your habits ?

Qua. Why art thou ?

Cler. I am a minister of the gospel.

Qua. Which never gave thee that tippit, nor that long and unbandy coat with many plaits.

Cler. But it is decent.

Qua. My coat is more decent, and would become thee better. It is plain and warm, and hath no long train, nor vain superfluities.

Cler. That solemn gate and mein too is very becoming.

Qua. Wouldest thou have me cut capers, and practise smiles ?

Cler. And be sure never alter the figure of that broad hat.

Qua. It is not broader than thine.

Cler. I tell you I am a minister.

Qua. Thy hat is none, and I make no ministerial use of mine. I do not go to my neighbour, and say : Neighbour, I demand the tenth of thy substance, by virtue of this broad hat.

Cler. Sir, who does ?

Qua. Friend, thou art very passionate. I am only defending my hat, whereof I make no other use but to keep my head warm.

Cler. Why don't you pull it off upon occasion ?

Qua. I do upon proper occasion, that is, when I seek God.

Cler. But never to man.

Qua. Therefore I do not, because I do it only to God. I think that the acts of worship, which we pay unto God, ought not to be confounded with ceremonies of civility paid unto men. Thou bowest at the name of Jesus, dost thou bow also at the name of the king ?

Cler. But you are inconsistent with yourselves. Your style to God and man is the same, and you *thee* and *thou* them both alike.

Qua. We speak properly to one God as one God, to one man as one man. Thou art more inconsistent with thyself. Thou reckonest thee and thou disrespectful to man : why usest thou the same language to God ?

Cler. It is the Scripture style.

Qua. To man as well as to God. Besides, friend, let me tell thee, that the using the plural number to single persons, was begun in flattery to princes and great men ; as was also the ceremony of the hat and the knee, and came to be practised as marks of adoration paid to men, who were thereby set up in God's stead ; and where they cannot go that length, yet they feed natural pride, and make differences amongst men, where nature hath made none.

Cler. We do not use them as marks of adoration.

Qua. I believe thee ; but still they are marks of insincerity, and of a submission which is not due from man to man. Friend, these civil ceremonies are of evil efficacy, and apt to deceive the mind into a slavish and superstitious veneration for persons. They make unnatural distances in society, and set men too far above and below one another. By such steps kings came to be worshipped as Gods ; as several of the Roman emperors formerly, and lately thy friend Louis was deified by many of thy French brethren.

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Dialogue between a Country Clergyman and a Quaker, continued.

Cler. Does the light within teach you all this ?

Qua. My natural light, which thou callest reason, sufficeth to confute thee. The other light seemeth to be withheld from thee, and therefore thou mockest it ; it better becomes a Christian to pray for it.

Cler. You are an impudent man. Is it from your inward light that you reproach me, as if I were not a Christian ?

Qua. Thou art very tender. I do not reproach thee with any such thing ; but I am sure that Christianity teacheth no man to deny the inward light, and to wax angry and revile.

Cler. I do not deny that there is such a thing as the light of the Spirit, but I deny that you have it.

Qua. Thy censure is rash. How knowest thou what is within me ?

Cler. By what comes out of you.

Qua. I judge not of thee by the same rule ; I hope thou hast charity, though I see it not. But I will abide by thy rule in relation to myself. What hast thou heard me utter but the words of truth and soberness ?

Cler. Not a word of the Spirit, I am sure.

Qua. Knowest thou him ? If thou dost, thou must know that he is the author of truth.

Cler. But not of sauciness and schism.

Qua. True, doctor ; and therefore the Quakers do not saucily insult, nor uncharitably damn all those, or any of those who differ from them. That is the only anti-christian schism, which damneth all men as schismatics, except its own cruel club.

Cler. A smart casuist, I'll assure you, to vindicate the Quakers from schism !

Qua. I wish thou couldst vindicate thyself as well upon the same pious and benevolent principle.

Cler. What do you charge the established church with schism ?

Qua. God forbid ; I only wish thee, and such as are like thee, a more peaceable and more merciful spirit. Thou art not the established church.

Cler. And dare you say that the Quakers are not schismatics ?

Qua. Yes, certainly ; I think that all good men, of all professions, will be saved. This is charity ; I separate from no church out of pride or interest, and am therefore no schismatic.

Cler. And herein, I suppose, the Spirit is your voucher.

Qua. I desire no other, and can have no other for the thoughts of my heart.

Cler. For which we are to take your word, for I think you never take oaths.

Qua. The Scripture forbiddeth us to swear at all.

Cler. It forbids profane cursing and swearing.

Qua. Doctor, it forbids all swearing.

. But the solemnity of an oath in the presence of God is an religion.

. All speaking is in the presence of God, and speaking the truth act of religion. When we are called upon to give our testimony truth, we never refuse it.

. I should be sorry to have my property depend upon your tion.

. If I am a good man, thou needest not distrust me ; if I am a an, my oath will not secure thee.

. I believe, indeed, the affirmation and oath of a Quaker are alike.

. They ought to be alike amongst all Christians, and all moral and therefore let thy meaning be ever so bitter, thou givest an able testimony to Friends. I hope thou findest the same faith- and sincerity amongst thine. Is not the word of a churchman l as his oath ?

. I hope better than a Quaker's, at least.

. Not if a Quaker speaketh the truth.

. That if was well put in.

. Be it so ; though thou mightest have spared thy reproach, by thou wo't gain nothing. None of us have been accused of ridence, and doubtless thou hast heard of many churchmen pun- with public infamy for perjury.

. I suppose you do the thing more slyly.

. I thank thee for allowing us to have more discretion than thy es : if they have, at least, as few restraints, and more folly than e, how are they bettered by thy teaching ? and how is their etter than our affirmation ?

. I cannot answer for profligates

. Nor oughtest thou to suspect us for profligates without cause.

. I must beg leave not to value 'a Quaker's affirmation so much urchman's oath.

. I will value it as much without leave. Friend, are thy breth- re loyal by taking oaths, than men of our persuasion are without any ?

. I'll take my oath that thou art a saucy fellow.

. I am not so the more for that.—But is that thy best answer ? I easily have given thee the same, had it been suitable to good rs.

. Manners ! O my sides ! Why, you are the most unmannerly ects : so unmannerly, that there is no living with you ; and all , despise you.

. Friend, I in particular have given thee no case for thy accusa- for thy contempt ; and what thou sayest of us in general, yest passionately, and it comes from prejudice, or ill information. nsylvania, where we have the power, we do not molest nor revile an of any religion ; and thou thyself, for all thy intemperate mightest live there with full freedom.

. I live amongst you ! I live amongst fanatics !

. I do not invite thee. There are no tithes there to allure, are are Indians to convert. How likest thou the employment, ie terms thereof ?

Cler. Sir, I have no call there ; I have employment in my own parish.

Qua. I hope thou hadst a call thither.

Cler. Yes, Mr. Pert, to preserve peace and religious order ; though you are an enemy to all order.

Qua. Thou hast not a more orderly man in thy parish : and many of thy flock are very disorderly, especailly upon holidays, which, I think, are part of your order, and celebrated with drunkenness and with breaking my windows.

Cler. Did I exhort them to it ?

Qua. No ; thou didst only paint out Quakers to them, as a people not fit to live amongst Christians.

Cler. I preached what I thought it my duty to preach.

Qua. And they practised what they thought thou hadst taught them to practise.

Cler. If you would wisely remove to Pennsylvania, you might live there with freedom, you know.

Qua. So I would, if my affairs would let me ; as I might here, under the protection of the law, if thou wouldst let me. Let me tell thee, friend, for the credit of the Quaker's government in Pennsylvania, there is not a more thriving colony in America. They encourage and protect all men, and persecute none : They are friendly to the savage Indians, who come freely into their houses by day, and by night and any man in a Quaker's habit may travel safely and singly through all the nations of North America, who will be ready to receive and assist him.

Cler. The Quakers are obliged to live peaceably with their neighbours. You know they must not fight.

Qua. Knowest thou any better way to avoid fighting, than a peaceable spirit ? And ought not all men to avoid fighting ? The Quakers, since their first establishment there, have had no wars. It is not so in New England, where men, like thee, are for spiritual dominion, and trust to the sword. There they use the poor natives ill, who therefore make frequent incursions upon them. Men who will take away by violence the lands and goods of others, and domineer over them, must fight to defend what they do. The Quakers have hurt no man, and no man offers to hurt them.

Cler. Commend me to their human prudence ! the Quakers will make no man their enemy by their zeal for Christianity.

Qua. Friend, thy abuse ends in praise. The Quakers use no man as an enemy for his religion ; and they who do, have not zeal, but fury and fanaticism. Our Saviour and his apostles had no such zeal. Ill usage, fierceness, and barbarity, convince no man ; nor is any man made a Christian by rage and power.

Cler. It would be great pity that such as you should make any. A Pagan converted into a Quaker makes but a sorry exchange.

Qua. Those words would fit the mouth of a Pagan better than thine ; and a Quaker is better qualified to reason with a Pagan, than thou art. We have nothing to desire of him but to be a Christian, and we gain neither money nor authority by his conversion. But with what face can such as thou art tell a nation of heathens : " Gentlemen, be of my religion, and in requital I will be your Lord and master, and take

the tenth of all you have, and all else that I can get. None of which can ever return to you again, let me use it, or abuse you how I will." And yet can men of thy spirit and pretensions reason in sincerity at any other rate with any set of men in the world ?

Cler. The man raves.—Can people pay too much for their souls ?

Qua. They ought to pay nothing. The blood of Christ is already paid. Is not that sufficient ? And dost thou really confess that thou wouldst not save souls without payment ?

Cler. I will bear no more.—This is audacious beyond human patience.

Qua. Doctor, nothing is beyond Christian patience.

Cler. Too much liberty makes you insolent.—We shall find some other way of confuting you.

Qua. Thou meanest force, which is the champion of bad reasoning, and a bad cause.

Cler. Hold you tongue, prater.

Qua. I have liberty of speech from Christ and the law.—Wouldst thou restrain it by thy breath ?

Cler. It is pity thy breath were not restrained.

Qua. Friend, may God of his great mercy forgive thee. Farewel.

NUMBER 74.

Of the Character and Capacity of the Fathers of the Church.

THE reading of the fathers, and an acquaintance with the fathers, has made a great noise in the world, as a momentous study, entitling the proficient in it to a high character, and the reputation of learning. Few people had leisure to read them, and fewer would take the pains ; and now I think most men agree, that the pains are not worth taking ; and he who employs his time that way, whatever industry he may have, is neither envied for his taste, nor admired for his acquirements, unless by those whose applause men of genius are not fond of. There is not much glory to be got in an employment, where, to excel in it, nothing is required but great drudgery, eminent patience, and no taste, or a wrong one. A clown may exult and swagger, because he is an accomplished ploughman ; but I would rather he should have the renown than I ; though a good ploughman is a good character in a country, and, in some instances, a drudging pedant, who is the ploughman in the learned world, is likewise an useful character. It might be, however, wished, that they would preserve the distance and humility of ploughmen, and not value themselves so much upon mere sweat and digging.

As to the fathers, there is so little to be learned from them, that they who know much of them, are only esteemed by such as know little of any thing. Nor was there ever any thing more insolent and dishonest,

than to refer us, for the knowledge of the Scriptures, to the fathers, who were very ignorant of them, that they almost constantly understood them in every sense but the true sense. They have such an appetite for vision, mystery, and obscurity, that in the plainest texts they find difficulty, darkness, allusion and enigmas ; and explain obvious passages, just as they do doubtful ones, by far-fetched and mysterious guesses and meanings, which contradict common sense, and which none that had it would have thought of. A plain and natural meaning which every body could see, would not serve their turn ; but they must extort a meaning, and so have the glory of the discovery ; and their thoughts, like their language, were forced and bombast. And to these men, who made the word of God of none effect, by darkening his plainest precepts with false glosses and figures, we are sent for instruction in that word.

Whoever has seen *Solomon's Temple Allegorized*, by John Bunyan, may find there a specimen of the sagacity and abilities of the fathers in explaining of Scripture. According to John, there was not a nail in that temple but had its typical purpose ; and every bason and pair of tongs prefigured some great mystery to come ; and in short, every stone and every tool in the temple prophesied. And in all this the pious Tinker did but tread in the steps of the fathers, without knowing it. As he had much more honesty, and a more quiet and beneficent spirit, than any of them ; so he had as much invention, and was full as equal to the business of allegory, as the best of them, and his fancy was not more heated than theirs ; and whoever reads his *Pilgrim's Progress*, need only suppose himself reading one of the brightest fathers in English ; and he will make them no ill compliment ; for his imagination, which was a very good one, was really more regular and correct than theirs. I have often thought the Rosicrusians a sort of modern fathers ; only they are more sublime in their reveries. They deal alike in the same puffry, false rhetoric, and their imaginations are alike inflamed and extravagant.

It is irrational and impious to suppose that Almighty God, the good, the merciful God, would give to his creatures instructions, commands, and advices, which were puzzling, obscure, or uncertain, when their eternal salvation was depending upon their conceiving and applying them aright. And yet these fathers suppose all this, in fetching from his word inferences and meanings, which, upon reading it, seem as different from it as any one language is from another. It is but justice to the omnipotent Being, to believe that he speaks candidly and intelligibly to his creatures, and to all his creatures, whenever he speaks to them at all. But this justice the fathers deny him, when they make him thus say one thing, and mean another.

And no more is it to be supposed, that the Father of mercies would cruelly impose upon us an impossible thing for a duty ; I mean that of agreeing with the fathers, who never agreed with one another, nor indeed with themselves. No people upon the earth ever differed more (no, not their successors) nor proceeded to greater fury and bitterness in their differences. They were constantly quarrelling about the smallest, as well as the greatest points ; and for the smallest, as well as for the greatest, they damned one another. It is to be hoped, that we are not to learn our religion from those who wanted charity ; nor our

charity and meekness from men that were perpetually quarrelling, and cursing each other.

They indeed contradicted the first principles of the gospel, by turning meekness, humility, and self-denial, into pride, riches, and domination ; and claimed all things, by virtue of a gospel that gave them nothing. Are these patterns for such as would *renounce the world, the flesh, and the devil ; and live sober, righteous, and godly in the world ?* Does their sainting of villains and assassins, as sometimes they did, entitle them to the character and reverence of saints ? Does their eternal contention and contradiction qualify them for the center of unity ? Is their turbulent spirit, and their wild want of common sense, their ravenous avarice, and flaming ambition, their fury and fighting, their frequent change of opinion, their apostacy and murders ; I say are all these, or any of them, proper marks of the guides of God's people ? And that these marks belong to many of the fathers, and all of them to some, is too manifest. Indeed, their own writings, and all ecclesiastical history, do little else but prove it.

We have often heard the dissenters charged with fanaticism, and their best writers have been called fanatics by men who revered much greater fanatics, whilst they revered the fathers, who far outwent in fanaticism even the wildest sectaries, that appeared in England during the late long civil war ; nor were the Ranters, Sweet-Singers, Muggletonians, Fifth Monarchy Men, or any of them all, more stark mad with enthusiasm than the fathers were ; who, besides the turbulency of their behaviour, by which they brought many and heavy evils and persecutions upon the primitive Christians, asserted principles utterly irreconcilable to human society, as well as to religion and reason. Jacob Behmen was not a greater visionary, nor vended more devout dreams.

I thank God, we can understand the Scriptures without the voluminous and contradictory ravings and declamations of the fathers, who have equally perverted the religion of Jesus, and the religion of nature ; both which are clear enough to those that will see them, and do mutually confirm each other. There is as much difference, and indeed opposition, between the New Testament and the writings of the fathers, as there is betwixt the Pentateuch and the Talmud ; which, by its fables, forgeries, and wild inventions, has mangled, darkened, and perverted the short and plain history of Moses ; nor are the dreams, fables, and absurdities of the fathers more sacred, or less glaring and extravagant, than those of the rabbies. Never were such ridiculous commentators upon texts ; and where a child that could but read would not have missed their meaning, the fathers have missed it. They were so far from understanding, applying, explaining, or improving the amiable and evident moral of the gospel, that whoever would look for it in a place where he is sure not to find it, need only read the fathers ; and I should think very meanly of our country curates, if most of them could not compose systems of divinity, more rational and scriptural than any of the fathers ever composed.

Thus much I thought proper to say here concerning the fathers. Whoever would see more elsewhere, may read the learned Dr. Whitby's late Latin treatise entitled, *Disquisitiones modestæ*, and Mr. Marrel's short history of councils, and Daillé of the use of the fathers.

A Letter to the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury; proving, That his Grace cannot be the Author of the Letter to an eminent Presbyterian Clergyman in Switzerland, in which Letter the present State of Religion in England is blackened and exposed.

Non potuit celare Piz Lodibria Fraudis.
BUCHAN.

Written in 1719.

MY LORD,

THERE is lately printed in Switzerland a book entitled, *Oratio Historica de Beneficiis in Ecclesiam Tigurinam collatis*: "An historical Oration concerning the mercies bestowed upon the church of Zurich." In the 14th page of which Oration the author gives an account of the present state of the English church, as the same was transmitted from hence, in an epistle to a principal person (or ruler) there, from one of the like, or greater character here.

As this epistle gives a frightful representation of the state of religion amongst us, in general; and, more particularly, of the distresses and dangers, which accrue to the church of England, from schism, heresy, and the ministry; I herewith send it to your Grace. I have translated it for the benefit of my less learned readers, and added some observations of my own, to expose a lurking author, who deceives and prejudices the world abroad with a base image of our church affairs under your Grace's administration. And I do it the rather, because, my lord, some people are so very ignorant and malicious, as to surmise that your Grace was the author of that letter, so inconsistent with your former life and character.

Oratio Historica de Beneficiis in Ecclesiam Tigurinam collatis, p. 14.

"ECCLESIA Anglicana divisionibus perrupta est, & schismatibus divisa; tot ac tam variis hominum ab ipsis sacris sese segregantium generibus confusa, ut nullis propriis nominibus vel ipsi se distinguere valeant, vel aliis describere. Atque utinam etiam hoc ultimum nobis querelæ argumentum esset! Sed impleri oportet quæcumque spiritus Dei olim futura prædixit; adeo ut inter nos ipsos exsurrexerint viri loquentes perversa. Et quid dico, viri? Immò Pastores, Episcopi ipsi manibus Ecclesiam diruunt, in quâ ministrant; ad cujus doctrinam pluries subscribere: Quibus defensio Ecclesiæ commissa, quorum munus est invigilare contra hostes ejus, eosque pro meritis redarguere, compescere, punire. Etiam hi illius Ecclesiæ auctoritatem labefactare nituntur, pro quâ non tantum certare, verum, si res ita postularet, etiam mori debuerint. Quæ sint horum novatorum placita, ex duobus nuperis scriptis Gallico sermone libellis aliquatenus discernere valeatis. Uno hîc verbo dixisse sufficiat, his hominibus omnes Fidei confessiones, omnes Articulorum subscriptiones, animitus displicere. Velle eos libertatem, seu verius licentiam omnibus concedi, quæcumque libuerit non tantum credendi, sed dicendi, scribendi, prædicandi; etiam si

Gratia Spiritûs Sancti, Christi Divinitas, & alia omnia Religionis nostra: principia maximè fundamentalia, exinde forent evertenda. Quis hæc Christianus, de hominibus nomine saltem Christianis, dici non obstupescat ! Quis non doleat hujusmodi *λύκας βάρους* non tantùm non ab Ovili longè arceri, verùm etiam intra ipsa Ecclesiæ pomeria recipi ? Ad honores, ad officia, ad gubernacula ejus admitti ? At vero ita se res habet. Dum ad ea, quæ sunt hujus seculi, unicè respicimus, prorsùm obliviscimur eorum quæ ad alterum spectant. Et quia horum hominum tolerantia & promotione quidam se populi favorem conciliaturos sperant, quibus id unicè cordi, ut in suis sese dignitatibus & potentiâ tueantur, parum curant quid de Ecclesiâ, de Fide, de Religione, de ipso denique Jesu Christo, ejusque veritate eveniat. Ignoscas, vir spectatissime, si, dum justo animi dolori indulgeam, indignationem meam contra hosce religionis nostræ inimicos paulò asperius, quam pro more meo, expresserim. Reum me putarem proditæ Fidei, si non his Hæreticis, quâvis occasione oblatâ, Anathema dixerim, &c.

In English thus.

THE church of England is broken by parties, and rent by schisms ; in short, distracted with such a number, and variety of separatists, that they want apt names to distinguish themselves from one another, and to describe themselves to the rest of the world.

And I wish even this were our highest ground of complaint ! But it must be fulfilled, what the Holy Spirit foretold in times past ; so that among ourselves men have arisen, speaking perverse things. But why do I say men ? When even pastors, nay, Bishops themselves, pull down with their own hands the church in which they minister, and to whose doctrine they have over and over subscribed, even they to whom the preservation of the church is committed, and whose business and duty it is to watch against her enemies, and to oppose, and restrain, and punish them. Yes, they strive to undermine and over-turn the authority of that church, for which they ought not only to contend, but, if occasion were, to lay down their lives.

What the pleas and pretensions of these innovators are, you may in some measure learn, from a couple of French pamphlets lately published. Let it here suffice to say in one word, that these men are angry at all confessions of faith, and all subscriptions of articles, and are for granting a general liberty, or rather a general licence, to all men, not only to believe, but to speak, and write, and preach whatever they please, tho' at the expence and ruin of the grace of the Holy Spirit, the divinity of our blessed Saviour, and all the other fundamental principles of our religion.

Who, that is a Christian, can without astonishment bear these things, of men that call themselves Christians ? and who can avoid lamenting, that these ravening wolves (*λύκας βάρους*) are not only not driven far away from the sheepfold, but even received within the very enclosures of the church, and admitted to her honours, her offices, and her government ? And yet so it unfortunately is.

But while we only strive for the things of this life, we woefully neglect those which belong to another. And because some hope, by the toleration and advancement of such men, to acquire the favour of the

people, and, by that means, maintain themselves in that which they have only at heart, their power and places, they care not what becomes of the church, or of the faith, or of religion, or indeed of Jesus Christ himself, and his cause.

You will pardon me, sir, that to gratify a just sorrow, I thus express my indignation, with more than usual bitterness, against these enemies of our religion. I should accuse myself of betraying the faith, did I not, on every occasion, denounce damnation against these heretics," &c.

Thus far the letter, as it is quoted in the Oration above mentioned. Your grace will perceive in it a spirit, which shews what blind zeal, and uncharitableness, go to the composition of a high churchman, who must see double, and represent at random, else it would be impossible for him, either to discover the danger of the church himself, or to shew the same to others. A character by no means becoming your grace.

A high churchman may be denominated from divers marks and exclamations. He must be devout in damning of dissenters; he must roar furiously for the church, and its great modern apostle, the late Duke of Ormond, with some other pious and forsworn gentlemen, who are well affected to the pretender and the convocation; he must rebel for passive obedience; he must uphold divine right by diabolical means; and, he must be loud and zealous for hereditary, indefeasible, and the like orthodox nonsense. But there is one sign more of a true churchman, which is more lasting and universal than all the rest, and that is a firm and senseless persuasion that the church is in danger. If a man believe this, it is enough, his reputation is raised; and, tho' his life shew more of the dæmon than the Christian, he shall be deemed an excellent churchman. This is so true, that, if an honest, atheistical churchman will but curse and roar against a toleration of dissenters, he shall be sure to find a toleration himself for the blackest iniquities, be rewarded with reputation, and, if possible, with power.

There was a fellow in Oxfordshire, one Jack Brunt, who had made himself famous for zeal and roguery. His whole life was religiously wasted in getting drunk for the church, and robbing of hen roosts and gardens. In short, he was the best churchman, and the greatest thief, in all the neighbourhood, and in high esteem with every one that honoured the cause of drunkenness and orthodoxy. But for all this merit, as Jack was carrying off half a dozen cabbages from farmer Shepherd's garden, he was unluckily apprehended, and carried before Justice Plowden. However, as Jack was upon his examination, and nigh his commitment, the parson of the parish, hearing of his tribulation, came to intercede for so worthy a fellow-labourer in the cause of tipling and conformity. The first thing the doctor said was, that tho' Jack was addicted to roguery, yet he was honest. How, sir! an honest thief! replied the Squire, spitting and staring. I mean he is for the church, answered the parson. The church, man! says his worship.—I hope the Common Prayer Book does not feed on cabbages. But consider, sir, said the doctor again, the prosecutor is a notorious dissenter. And what if he be, quoth the Justice? Have not Presbyterians a toleration to eat their own cabbages? Away, away, Mr. what d'ye call; I love the church very well, and yet I'll have this fellow gaoled and whipped. Jack was accordingly committed, and all

the while he peeped through the grate, he modestly acquainted every one who came to see him, that his sufferings were all for the church. And in this the parson joined with him, and collected money all round the country for Jack, by the name of an honest churchman, who was persecuted by a fanatic. He particularly told a zealous gentlewoman, the better to dispose her to be liberal, that Jack had cursed king George, at a public alehouse in Ab——n.

My lord, I have repeated this story, to shew you what you no doubt know and lament; namely that this mad fondness for the name and power of the church, has dissolved the bonds of justice and charity, and confounded merit and villany, and sanctified the vilest immoralities.

Your grace does, without question, behold, with grief and shame, that those who are employed, and even greatly rewarded, to keep up the land-marks between virtue and vice, do notwithstanding often trample upon peace and truth, and animate the mad multitude to seek their salvation in the paths of wickedness and destruction.

Had your grace been the author of the letter, instead of bewailing notions and opinions, which no body can help, and which hurt nobody, you would have lamented and rebuked what is truly lamentable, that shameless corruption of manners, and that horrid prostitution of conscience and oaths, which are countenanced and practised by many who are fond of the word, *Church*, but are at great enmity with religion and liberty.

I grant that such persons are orthodox conformists to all the ceremonies and bowings enjoined by authority, and true believers of all the mysteries which the church has thought fit to maintain in opposition to carnal reason, that being no guide in spiritual matters, which being inconceivable, ought therefore to be believed. But as a good life and righteous behaviour are of some use and importance to human society, your grace to be sure wishes that all your clergy were of my mind, and would not only believe well, but, if it may be, live well also.

I am perhaps, proposing a task to them, for which some of them will not thank me. But as the advantages which arise from virtue and good conscience, are many and obvious to me; and as the dreadful practice of perjury is not only very common, but even impiously justified in some of our pulpits, by those whose duty it is to shew its horror, and press its punishment, were religion any part of their aim; and as all sorts of lewdness and vice accompany this infamous departure from common honesty, this truly damnable schism from the spirit of Christianity; I cannot love religion and my country so little, as to be altogether silent on these important heads.

With what face and conscience can that man, or minister, who breaks avowedly the third command, persuade the keeping of the other nine? And are there not clergymen who pray for his majesty in the desk, and damn both him and his title in the pulpit? Who swear to him, and betray him? Who pledge their souls for their allegiance to him, and yet think him an usurper; and do their hellish endeavours to dethrone him? And are not such atheists zealous for the church, and loud in the cry of her danger?

Are not such men manifest foes to Christianity, and all social virtues, who by their blasphemous practices, and their unhappy power over the stupid vulgar, do what in them lies to break the bonds of human faith?

and society, and to banish truth, good, nature and morality, from the face of the earth ?

Is not this, my lord, a shocking scene ? Are not these diabolical teachers ? And yet they are all orthodox to a degree, and far from pulling down the church with their own hands, though they are enemies to God and man.

It is plain that these are not the men meant by the complainer, who only laments the diversity of opinions amongst us ; as if our belief and sentiments, which are perhaps the effects of education, or complexion, were such terrible things, though all their guilt consists in provoking the pride of the worst sort of priests, who, by their lives, seem to know no religion but superstition and cruelty.

These Jacobite parsons, who take the oaths to a prince whom they abhor, and are perpetually betraying, shew, that their consciences are either seared beyond feeling, or that they have none at all. Can such monsters, who are the pests and shame of their own species, tell us that they are Christians (for as to their being true churchmen, we make no doubt of it) and yet go on, as they do, to make void the eternal laws of God and nature, by swearing falsely, and using the great and solemn name of God purely to deceive ? How little do they seem to believe of that divine vengeance and damnation, which they so liberally denounce against others ?

Their other morals are of a piece with their dreadful and repeated perjuries. To come drunk to the sacrament ; to debauch and play at cards on Sunday ; to be perpetually wrangling with their neighbours ; to be ever sowing sedition and falsehood, and fomenting strife ; to be perpetually flinging hell fire at all who will not be forsworn like themselves ; to be idle, riotous, drunken, forsworn, are all so many current symptoms of a conscience prostituted or dead. *Quis hæc Christianus, de hominibus nomine saltem Christianis, dici non obstupescat ! &c.*

Of all these crying enormities, though manifest and far spread, this mourner, this mouth and representative of the church, takes not the least notice. It is orthodoxy, it is jurisdiction which he contends for ; things, which however void of true piety, or inconsistent with it, yet are the limbs and citadels of a corrupt priesthood.

To put this business of orthodoxy and impiety still in a stronger light, I will beg leave to suppose, that there are, or may be, such characters as the following, and by them it will appear how a very ill man, when he is for the church, becomes a very good man ; and, on the contrary, how a very good man, when the church is against him, is made a very ill man. For instance,

One parson is drunken and quarrelsome ; but then he bows to the altar, and thinks king William is damned.

Another cheats every body, and pays nobody. It is true, but he drinks to the royal orphan, and cannot abide king George.

A third neither preaches nor prays, but he does a more meritorious thing — he fervently curses the Germans and the Presbyterians.

A fourth has hot blood, and loves unnatural pleasures ; but he has chaste principles, and swears that bishops are by divine right.

A fifth lets his father starve in a gaol, and the old miserable man, who had impaired his substance, to breed his son a parson, writes a

petition to this hopeful child, to send him bread, or a coffin, and can procure neither, but perishes. But for all that, this unnatural, pious priest roars for the danger of the church, and is a dutiful son of it.

A sixth is an evidence upon a trial, and forswears himself; but the cause was for tythes, and he did it out of love for the church.

A seventh is a scoffer, who laughs at religion; but he hates the Whigs, and gets often drunk for the prosperity of the church.

Now for the low church clergy.

One is a pious man, and lives in the fear of God; will that do? No, he thinks dissenters may be saved.

Another has great learning and industry, and employs them both honestly and usefully. That's nothing — he came over with king William, and opposed king James and Popery.

A third is a great master of reasoning, his life unblameable, and his sincerity and integrity are unquestionable. What then? He is not a good churchman — He says Presbyterians should not be hanged for following their conscience, and keeping the Sabbath.

A fourth is a pious person, a constant attendant upon the service of the church, and charitable beyond belief. What then? That bishop is a Presbyterian — he said the Duke of Ormond was a traitor.

A fifth is strictly devout and religious, an unmoveable adherent to truth, and one who sacrificed his all, even his daily bread, to his conscience, which is neither fashionable, nor conforming; therefore he should be burnt, because he would not forswear himself, and say that he believed in St. Athanasus.

A sixth is a great champion for natural and revealed religion, the truth of which he has demonstrated, and his piety and parts are admirable; a man who has missed the mitre by deserving it! Why, he ought to be burnt too, because he is for founding faith upon Scripture only.

A seventh is an aged person, venerable for learning and piety. who has done service to religion and mankind, by his infinite labours in history sacred and profane. But notwithstanding all this, he is no churchman; he is tainted with moderation.

The last I shall mention is one, who gives up his life to good works, and his income to charity. But this excellent Christian is a bad churchman, for he was heard to say, once upon a time, that king Charles the First, and arch-bishop Laud were but *men*.

This, my Lord, is the state of the case between high church and low church; and let common sense determine, which is the more material to religion, the belief of a point of speculation, perhaps false, perhaps insignificant, perhaps blasphemous; for 'tis unproved, and may be any thing; or, the utmost sincerity and goodness in life and opinion.

Having thus taken a general view of our mourner's declamation, I shall now consider it more particularly, piece by piece; and in doing this, I shall be greatly helped by your Lordship's judgment and authority, since out of your writings alone, I shall be able to shew sufficiently the deceit and groundless clamours of this lurking author.

First, he says, that the church of England is broken by parties, and rent by schisms ; in short, distracted with such a number, and variety of separatists, &c.

And here I think it is plain, that the author does not by the church mean religion ; for as religion does not only permit, but even command men to act from conviction, there will ever be different opinions about spirituals, so long as there are different complexions, and different understandings amongst mankind. All religion infers conscience and voluntary choice ; and he, who has not these for his motives to devotion, but stupidly follows the uncertain authority of names and persons, may indeed be a very good conformist, and pay great reverence to the clergy ; but will never bring along with him an acceptable worship to God, or benefit to his own soul ; which, I think, with humble submission to the author, are two things worth minding, though obedience to church authority, seems with him to be of much greater moment.

If I think I am certainly, or most probably in the right, and yet act contrary to what I think so, I am then as certainly in the wrong.

I wish this author (whoever he be) had consulted your grace's judicious and Christian Defence of the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Church of England, in the several articles expounded by Monsieur De Meaux, as well as your admirable Sermons, entitled, *False Prophets*, &c. before he had thus treacherously betrayed his native country, basely misrepresented the church of England to a Presbyterian clergy abroad ; and factiously vilified and traduced the best law which was ever enacted for the honour and defence of the Protestant religion, and of those principles which have deservedly advanced your grace to the most eminent station in the church and kingdom.

In the first of these books* your grace excellently observes, that " In matters of faith, a man is to judge for himself, and the scriptures are a clear and sufficient rule for him to judge by ; and therefore if a man be evidently convinced upon the best enquiry he can make, that his particular belief is founded upon the word of God, and that of the church is not, he is obliged to support and adhere to his own belief, in opposition to that of the church." And (as your grace proceeds in the same strain of good sense and charity) " the reason of this must be very evident to all those who own, not the church, but the scriptures, to be the ultimate rule, and guide of their faith. For, if this be so, then individual persons as well as churches, must judge of their faith according to what they find in scripture — and, if they are convinced that there is a disagreement in any point of faith, between the voice of the church and that of scripture, they must stick to the latter rather than the former ; they must follow the superior, not inferior guide — this method is most just and reasonable, and most agreeable to the Constitution of the church of England, which does not take upon her to be absolute mistress of her members ; but allows a higher place and authority to the guidance of the Holy Scriptures, than to that of her own decisions."

Quorsum mihi mea Conscientia, si mihi secundum alienam Conscientiam vivendum est, & moriendum ? said John Gerson, chancellor of

* Defence of the Exposition, &c. pag. 81.

Paris. "To what purpose have I a conscience of my own, if the conscience of another person must be my only rule of living and dying?"

Your grace, in your Sermon, preached at St. James's, Westminster, on the fifth of November, 1699, and entitled *False Prophets tried by their fruits*; I say, your grace, ever zealous for truth and liberty, does here assert, in opposition to the pretensions of designing "men, who call themselves the church, and have usurped authority over the consciences of men*;" "That the right of examining what is proposed to us in matters of religion, is not any special privilege of the pastors, or governors of the church, but is the common right and duty of all Christians whatsoever."

And if, in consequence of this examination, a man be convinced, "that his particular belief is founded upon the word of God, and that of the church is not;" your grace has told us, in your *Defence of the Exposition* above cited, "That such a man is obliged to support and adhere to his own belief, in opposition to that of the church."

Here we have your grace's public opinion, that we are obliged to follow a private nonconforming conscience to a conventicle, whenever we think the established church is in the wrong. For, as your grace further observes, † "Every particular person is to answer to God for his own soul, and must examine, as far as he is able, both what he believes, and how he practises, and upon what grounds he does both; and not follow any Assembly, though of never so much seeming authority.

‡ "And yet (continues your grace) how confidently do some men tell us, that we must believe them before our own reason — that it is schism and heresy, and I know not what besides, to doubt of, or differ with them in any thing that they require us to believe; and that much better were it to shut our eyes altogether, and go on blindfold under their conduct, than to follow the clearest light that scripture, or reason, or even sense itself, can give us.

§ "But let them (says your grace) assume what authority they please to themselves, and raise what clamour they can against us; when all is done, this conclusion will remain firm as heaven, and clear as any first principle of science, that, if the scriptures be, as we all agree that they are, the word of God, and were written for our instruction; then we must follow the conduct of them, and hold fast to the truth which they deliver, though not only a company of assuming men, calling themselves the church, but the whole world should conspire against us."

In this unanswerable manner has your grace, long before you came to be at the head of the church, shewn the reasonableness, and even the necessity of separation; and ridiculed the stale and deceitful cry of heresy and schism, which being nothing else but a departure from the way of thinking established by law, and an adherence to truth as it appears, and not as it is represented by human authority, are not only the most harmless, but the most commendable things in the world. Taking them in this view, they are not only true friends to Christian and civil liberty, but even the necessary effects of it; and nothing but

* Pag. 12, † Ser. p. 13. ‡ Pag. 15. § Pag. 15.

the fiercest tyranny can try to oppress them. I am almost of opinion, that if it had not been for the Puritans, we should have been long since, not only without the Protestant religion but without any religion at all. It is certain, these old fellows, as queer and fantastical as they were, always opposed the growth of ceremonies and arbitrary power; and, if your grace's predecessor, archbishop Laud, when many peaceable and industrious Protestant dissenters fled from his fury to the wild beasts and rattlesnakes of America, could have sent all the rest after them, he might have successfully Popified us into that abject slavery and uniformity, which his good catholic Christianity had projected for us.

And therefore, without disguising the matter, or falling into the senseless ditty of lamenting our divisions in opinion, I heartily thank God that we have dissenters, and I hope we shall never be without them. They are sentries and watchmen against the sly intrigues and conspiracies of designing churchmen, who, could they but wheedle, or drive all men into one belief, would soon grow as independent and uncontrollable as the Pope or the Czar. Bigotry, chains, and cruelty, are always, and in all places the certain issue of uniformity; which is itself of an infamous race, being begot by the craft of the priests upon the ignorance of the laity. I think that it puts uniformity and what is generally called schism, in a true light; that tyranny can never subsist without the first, nor liberty without the latter.

For my part, I do not know one dissenter in England, but who sincerely believes the Scriptures, and faithfully adheres to king George and his government; and, in consequence of both, prays to God heartily, and pays his taxes cheerfully. Let the church boast as much of her conforming sons if she can.

Oh! but schism and dissenters break the peace of the church!—— I never much liked this same phrase, *The peace of the church*, because there is always something very bad tacked to it. For, in short, those who have the impudence to appropriate that name (the church) to themselves, will never be at peace till they have got the possession of our estates, and the keeping of our senses; so that religion, and property, and reason, and conscience, must all go to ruin, to give such a church peace. Nothing else will do. At this present time, the church, besides the great increase of her revenues, enjoys all the advantages which she ever had since the reformation, except that of worrying schismatics; and yet, by daily experience we see, and by this very letter we see, that the high-church parsons will not be at peace.

I have thus far spoke my mind frankly upon the topic of schism, emboldened so to do by your grace's great name and example, who have in many places and discourses, taught mankind not to be alarmed with words and bugbears. Your grace* "accounts it a meanness of spirit to desert the truth, or be afraid to own it, though never so much clamoured against by ignorant or designing men;" of which truth, you say, every man must judge for himself; as I have quoted it already.

The next complaint in the letter is, "Of men who speak perverse things, and of pastors, nay bishops, who pull down the church, and undermine its authority, though they have subscribed to its doctrine, and therefore ought to contend for it, and even die for it."

* State of the church, &c. page 3,

Here is the most rank, though impotent malice shewn against the best bishop, best protestant, and best man, who ever adorned the mitre ; and for the best actions which he was capable of, viz. for his comprehensive love to mankind, and for strenuously supporting those principles, upon which alone the protestant religion, his majesty's title, and the liberties of the world can be defended ; all which entitles him in a particular manner to your grace's protection, who have always maintained the same, and now worthily enjoy the rewards of your virtue.

But it is no wonder that my lord bishop of Bangor,* should suffer under the rage of a wicked and despairing faction, when even your grace's great post and character do not protect your innocence from their feeble assaults ; otherwise they could never have surmised your grace to be the author of so senseless a declaration, against one of your own order, and in contradiction to the whole tenour of your life, the expectations of your friends, I will not say engagements to those who had the honour to prefer you.

Your grace has always, in your excellent writings, asserted the contrary principles, and therefore this foolish paper must have come from some foul mouthed high-church man, and one of that new sort of disciplinarians, who, your grace, in your Appeal, assures us " are risen up from amongst ourselves ; who seem to comply with the government of the church, much upon the same account as others do with that of the state, not out of conscience to their duty, or any love they have for it ; but because it is the established church, and they cannot keep their preferments without it. They hate our constitution, and revile all that stand up in good earnest for it ; but for all that, they resolve to hold fast to it, and so go on to subscribe and rail."

These are the church monsters, or many headed hydras heroically vanquished by your grace and the bishop of Bangor, who have ever maintained the king's supremacy, and the total dependance of the clergy upon the laity ; and have manfully opposed civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, in all their shapes ; for which you have been falsely represented as Judas's, Chuch Empsons, and Church Dudleys, and what not ? And now, my lord, you having disarmed them of all fair weapons, they have recourse to the blackest calumny, and the fiercest railing.

The letter writer comes next to shew, What are the pleas and pretensions of these innovators, as he calls them ; and these, he says, may be learned from a couple of French pamphlets lately published, the authors of which, and their confederates, whom he has before described, are angry at all confessions of faith, and all subscription of articles, and are for a general toleration, which he invidiously calls, a general licence ; and he might, with the same candour, have christened it a general libertinism.

One of the Treatises here referred to, is written by Mr. Durette, and I suppose, the other by Mr. De la Pillioniere, and both intended to expose the absurdity, and shew the ridicule of broad-brimmed hats and grave faces, meeting in synods to reveal the revealed will of God ; and to make creeds and confessions of faith, and carry them by a majority of voices (often of proxies) which creeds the laity are to believe at present, and in all generations to come.

* Dr. Benjamin Hoadley, now Lord Bishop of Winchester.

I very much suspect the virulent libeller, under the shelter of opposing these poor French refugees, intends to level his bold invective against your grace's person and writings, in which you have so openly and significantly declared your opinion of what is to be expected from such assemblies of clergymen, who have no other business there but to spread uncharitableness and dissension amongst the people ; and to warp wealth, dominion, and power to themselves.

In your *Authority of Christian Princes*, you excellently well observe, "That* nothing more exposed our Christian profession heretofore, or may more deserve our serious consideration at this day, than the violence, the passion, the malice, the falseness, the oppression, which reigned in most of the synods held by Constantine, and after him by the following emperors, upon occasion of the Arian controversy. Bitter are the complaints which we are told that great emperor made of them : The barbarians, (says he in a letter to one of them,) for fear of us, worship God ; but we mind only what tends to hatred, to dissension, and in one word, to the destruction of mankind."

You further observe of synods in general :† "What good can be expected from the meeting of men, when their passions are let loose, and their minds disordered ; when their interest and designs, their friends and parties, nay, their very judgments and principles lead them different ways, and they agree in nothing so much, as their being very peevish ; when their very reason is depraved, and they judge not according to truth and evidence, but with respect to persons, and every one opposes what another of a different persuasion moves or approves of?"

I heartily concur with your grace in your opinion of such assemblies ; and, indeed, I cannot see what good they can do, were it possible they were inclined to do it : the common pretence is, to make faith to explain religion, and to teach the Holy Ghost to talk intelligibly. Vain and weak men ! as if the Almighty was not capable of making himself understood without their help, when he intends to be understood ; or, as if a few fallible mortals, neither more wise, or more honest than other men, were capable of discovering what the Almighty has a mind to conceal ; or as if the divine goodness would cruelly hide from us what is necessary for us to know.

If the scriptures are so abstruse, and want so much explanation, how are they so plain, that he who runs may read ? And how can God Almighty (whose laws they are) be said to will that all men should come to the knowledge of the truth ? And how are the great things of religion revealed to babes and sucklings, and hid from the learned and wise ?

The Romish clergy act consistently with themselves, when they pretend to believe that the Holy Ghost presides in their general councils, and consequently may be allowed to explain his own meaning. But it is incorrigible impudence in Protestant priests, to assume to talk or write better than the Holy Spirit himself, when they pretend not to his assistance, nor will accept of any other if they can help it.

And therefore I shall conclude this head, and stop this reviler's

* Page 307.

† Page *ibid.*

mouth, by telling him in your Grace's words : * " That nothing at this day preserves us from ruin and desolation, but that we (the clergy) have not power of ourselves to do the church a mischief ; and the prince, who sees too much of our temper, is too gracious to us, and has too great a concern for the church's good, to suffer us to do it."

The letter goes on, and the next passage is pregnant with anger and scurrility. " Who," says the author, " that is a Christian, can avoid lamenting that these ravening wolves, (I wish he does not mean such men as your Grace, and the bishop of Bangor, &c.) are not only not driven far away from the sheepfold, but even received within the inclosures of the church, and admitted to her honours, her offices, and her government ? But so it unfortunately is, while we only strive for the things of this life, we wofully neglect those which belong to another. And because some hope by the toleration, and advancement of such men, to acquire the favour of the people, and thereby maintain themselves in that which they have only at heart, their power and places ; they care not what becomes of the church, or of the faith, or of religion, or indeed of Jesus Christ himself, and his cause."

Here is a volley of rage and ugly names, enough to distance Billingsgate, and to put all reasonable and moderate railing out of countenance for ever. How ! thought I, when I read it first, have we got Bungey† here ? It savours filthily of the sermon at St. Paul's, and breathes the very same truth, and good sense. Pray God the poor orthodox lunatic may come off no worse than he did last time — I know a galled back will not agree with his choleric soul, and I see no hopes of escaping. Blessed memory is no more ; and within these five years we have had one rebelling priest hanged, and another seditious priest set in the pillory — Once more heaven preserve poor Bungey. But while I was in the midst of my soliloquy, I happily remembered that the letter was written in Latin ; and so I cleared myself of my fears, and the doctor of the learned scandal.

From the falsehood of the assertions, and the bitterness of the style, I should have suspected friar Francis‡ for the author ; but as it bears no tincture of his spirit and parts, I am sure none of this dull dirt is of his flinging.

Upon the whole, my Lord, I am come to a persuasion, that this wretched author is some wooden implement of the late reign ; some northern genius, some holy bigot, and § bungler of peace, made use of by his masters, as a foul hand to sign away the Protestant religion, and the liberties of Europe.

Supposing this author to be a Papist (which is most likely) this doleful ditty of his will run most naturally, in the following style, into which I have paraphrased it.

" Who that is a good Catholic, can avoid crossing himself, and saying his *Pater Noster*, when he sees that, though the titular bishop of Bangor's heterodox principles are the barrier of the great schism, called the reformation, and are the gulph over which no rational Englishman

* Dedication to the Appeal, &c.

† A name given to Dr. Sacheverel.

‡ Dr. Francis Atterbury.

§ Some have applied this (I suppose maliciously) to Dr. Robinson, late bishop of London.

can pass into the bosom of mother church ; yet that arch heretic is not only not burnt, but even sacrilegiously exercising the office of a pretended bishop, and poisoning the people with the damnable doctrines of private judgment, and liberty of conscience ; and falsely asserting that the priests cannot forgive sin, and command heaven. But so it unfortunately happens, that while we only strive for religion and liberty, we woefully forget those things which belong to the church ; and because some hope, by their favouring and protecting of Protestants to gain the good will of Protestants, and thereby gratify their schismatical ambition of being at the head of the Protestant interest ; they care not what becomes of his holiness the Pope, nor of tradition, the real presence, nor indeed of transubstantiation itself."

Your Grace, my Lord, will perceive how naturally this silly declamation, full of froth, and empty of reasoning, runs into ridicule. And, in short, there is no other way of answering it, but by giving it a turn of this sort ; for it is all noise and scolding, it fixes upon no certain point, nor does it state or confute any particular error.

Our author's concluding words are remarkable ones. Says he, " You will pardon me, sir, that, to gratify a just sorrow, I thus express my indignation, with more bitterness than usual, against these enemies of our religion. I should accuse myself of betraying the faith, did I not on every occasion denounce damnation against these heretics."

Here is a true image of a priestly spirit, destitute of all humanity and the fear of God, and fraught with fire and brimstone, which he scatters so freely among the sons of men. 'Tis (I had almost said) well, that the more merciful devils have the custody of these flaming materials. Dreadful ! that honest men, and sincere Christians, should be wantonly consigned over to eternal flames, for adhering to the truth, or what appears to them to be so, which is all that is required of them ! This, in short, is the case——They please God, and make the parsons mad.

Your grace perceives, and, no doubt, with horror, the execrable genius and malice of this author, who, by the assuming style of his cursing of Christians, seems willing to be thought a firebrand of authority, and an atheist of power. What a blessing it is to this church and nation, that such a ravening wolf does not fill your Lordship's chair !

Gratulor huic Terræ

I wish that this curser would be instructed by your Lordship's excellent words, particularly where you so warmly, so Christianly recommended a " mutual charity, which alone, (you say,) can secure us amidst all our errors ; and which with an agreement in what is most necessary, will to the honest and sincere, be sufficient for our eternal security. This, (your grace adds,) should make us more sparing in our anathemas and more zealous in our prayers for one another." With much more excellent advice to the same purpose, your Grace also in your excellent Sermon printed in '89, has this remarkable and Christian passage : " Who am I, that should dare to pronounce a sentence of reprobation against any one, in whom there will appear all the other characters of an humble, upright, sincere Christian, only because he

is not so wise, and it may be wiser than I am, and sees further than I do, and therefore is not exactly of my opinion in every thing ?”

To give a man to the devil, is an odd way of keeping him from the devil ; which I ignorantly imagined was the profession and duty of every clergyman.

I have thus, my Lord, taken to pieces this venomous author, and shewn his spirit. He has reviled, beyond sea, one whom he dares not attack at home. And he sculks and scolds in Switzerland, because his base spirit must breathe somewhere.

But praised be Almighty God, however he may gratify himself by reviling other bishops, the nation is blessed in your grace with a Metropolitan of such uniformity in life and principles, as must ever baffle calumny, and confound the malice of his and the church's enemies ; and who will never give occasion to such a story as is told of a western bishop at the revolution, who fled from the Protestant religion, and the prince of Orange at Exeter, to king James and father Peters at London, and was made an archbishop for his loyalty and passive obedience. But, as he was going northward to take possession of his new dignity, he bethought himself that the Bible was better, and like to get the better of his holiness and Popery ; and so he declared for the prince, and a free Parliament, upon the road.

I have the honour to be with profound veneration,

My Lord,

your grace's most dutiful son,

and most obedient, humble servant.



An Examination of the Facts and Reasonings in the Lord Bishop of Chichester's Sermon, preached before the House of Lords, on the 30th of Jan. 1731. Humbly addressed to His Lordship.

MY LORD,

I HAVE read some very extraordinary sermons on this same occasion, and heard of many more such ; but considering the place, and the preacher, I believe there have been found few more notable than that preached lately by your lordship.

In your Sermon upon church authority, you drew so much trouble upon yourself, by your unwary positions, no wise favoured by Scripture, and successfully exposed by a brother prelate (famous for his love and defence of truth, however unfashionable and disgustful) that I hoped you would have proved more circumspect in any labours of yours, that were to be afterwards presented to the world. I am therefore sorry, that you should again lay yourself open ; and whilst you are scattering your public rebukes, should deserve one yourself.

I should indeed have still thought you too wise and moderate, to be capable of reviving old heats and partialities, had you not in fact done it : nor else could I have imagined that you would again venture into the world another performance so very loose and exceptionable, that even your friends condemn it, and think it ill judged, and unfair.

I know nothing more repugnant to the spirit of the gospel, than for one professing to preach it, to enlist himself a champion of a party, indeed almost of any party ; since most parties are too visibly heated and influenced by motives altogether worldly, passionate and human ; nor so much concerned what serves the interest of truth, as what serves the interest of faction ; and are generally foes to truth, where truth interferes with them. Surely 'tis unworthy of a preacher of the gospel, to fence with or against sounds, to equivocate and lay false colours, to discover faults on one side only, to invent merit on the other, and to darken, or disguise, or suppress facts ; instead of informing, to mislead ; and to heighten popular animosities, instead of calming them. All this is the work, not of a preacher, whose province is truth and peace ; but of an apologist, who hides or adulterates the truth ; of an inflamer, who would create rage and strife.

Whether such wicked use had not been made of this same anniversary, experience too sadly tells ; and whether your Lordship hath made a right use of it, whether you have been utterly unmoved by the spirit of party, and of your order, and have censured without prejudice or partiality, I leave to your own conscience, and the consideration of our readers.

Your Lordship begins with the use which is to be made of history, and particularly of the impious fact then to be commemorated. But I doubt, in making use of that fact you are too narrow, and have omitted one of the principal uses (whether in tenderness to the memory of that prince, or in mistaken court to other princes) namely, what bitter effects he felt from his thirst of unbounded power ; that in violating his duty, he brought misery upon himself ; that if he had observed the laws, and protected the rights of his people ; his people, and the laws would have protected him : but that by following evil counsels, and his own arbitrary will, whilst he was misguided by flattering and ambitious bishops, and oppressed his lay subjects, he lost the hearts and confidence of his people ; and by pursuing lawless measures, taught his enemies to destroy him against law.

Another obvious use to be made of this fact, omitted likewise by your Lordship, is, thence to warn princes against being seduced by pious flattery, or any flattery ; nor to suffer sycophants, especially religious sycophants, the most dangerous of all others, to inspire them with evil passions, or to soothe such passions as they already have. King Charles the First had raised the power of the church, even beyond his own ; and the churchmen openly asserted their power to be independent and unaccountable ; independent even of the crown, though they had sworn the contrary ; and in return for his suffering them to usurp upon him, they encouraged and prompted him to usurp upon the kingdom. Thus the two lawless powers were to support and recompense each other. It was indeed a plain, a wicked bargain struck between the crown and the mitre ; both bent to enslave these nations, and to divide shares in the common oppression. For the clergy are not wont to serve either God, or the king for nought ; and though they be spiritual men, whose only business is to guide us to the other world, they are seldom satisfied with a small part of this, which they are always teaching others to renounce. It was well said by a reverend doctor, to an assembly of

doctors: "If you would teach the laity to condemn the world, shew them the way, by condemning it first yourselves."

Is not this a true account? Had not the king and the clergy, by breaking all bounds, and by invading the privileges and properties of all men, drawn down a general odium upon both crown and mitre? And has your Lordship fully, or at all, opened and owned this matter? Have you warned princes and churchmen against aspiring to more power or wealth than the constitution has given them; against the iniquity and infamy of violating their trust, a trust so important and sacred? Have you warned them against the consequence and the curse of ambition and violence?

Your Lordship repeats the words of your text, "to fear the Lord and the king, and not to meddle with them that are given to change;" and you add, that "had our forefathers followed this advice, the horrid fact we this day lament, had not been committed." My Lord, I say, if that prince and the churchmen then had followed this advice, that horrid fact never had been committed. Who were addicted to change? Was it the king and churchmen? Or was it the people? Not the people surely, who seem to have been entirely contented with the form of government, and not to have had a thought of another, till they were daily more and more incensed by the merciless oppressions of the court and the bishops. My Lord Clarendon owns the good temper and inclinations of the people, which were so remarkably peaceable that thence, he says, many wondered the more at the prodigious change which afterwards happened, and seems to lay the blame of all upon arch-bishop Laud.

The question therefore is, who were the aggressors? Who began enormities, who defied and overturned the law? Was it the people? No. It was the court and the clergy, and both rioted in lawless rule for a long course of years. After this change, this alarming change, where all law and security were swallowed up, it was natural for other changes to follow; and when once a general war was begun, no change, nor any excess was to be wondered at. Had not the king disregarded, and even overthrown law, he needed not have been a martyr to public resentment, nor even to a particular faction. Neither can I comprehend what you mean, when towards the end of your sermon, you say, "That the crown is now limited by law;" as if it had not been so then.

I agree with your Lordship, "That the like can never happen again, if posterity will have the wisdom to take warning from this example." But to condemn indiscriminately all that was done, especially at first, against the king, and indiscriminately to extol his character and reign, is the ready way to encourage the like to happen over and over. It is plain that his son was thus encouraged, and thus came to suffer as well as his father; nor can I say, that the fate of the son was less miserable than that of the father, but rather to any man of spirit more miserable. I am moreover very inclinable to fear that were times to change once more, we should hear higher encomiums upon the martyrdom of eighty-eight, than upon that of forty-eight, (if that be possible) and from the same men too. We should then be told what concessions the martyr king James made, and how sincere he was in them; he told how criminal they were who would not accept them; though 'tis manifest he made none with any the least intention

to keep them. Nay, 'tis probable we should be told too, that he had a divine right to do what he pleased, and none had a right to control him, or to expect any concessions at all from him ; and that all which has been done since, has been only successful rebellion. For what has been too wicked or too mad, to be said upon both these occasions already, and upon both these kings ?

That his father was very sincere, your Lordship takes upon you to determine roundly. Though the violation, the repeated and continual violation of his coronation oath ; his passing the bill of rights, and owning all these rights to be legal and just, and thence confessing that he had broken them all ; nay, his violating that very bill in all its parts, almost as soon as he had passed it, were but ill marks of a heart very upright and sincere. Of all these excesses he was guilty, at a time when his parliament were well disposed for the honourable support of his government, and free from any design to distress it, much less to alter it ; nay, were ready to grant him very noble supplies, if he would but have suffered justice to be done upon public traitors, the infamous instruments of illegal power and of mutual distrust between him and his people.

Whilst I am upon this head, I would take notice that he actually committed, or attempted to commit all the enormities, all the acts of usurpation committed by the late king James ; levied money against law, levied forces, and obliged his subjects to maintain them, against law ; raised a body of foreign soldiers to destroy the law, and enslave his people at once ; dispensed with all the laws ; filled the prisons with illustrious patriots who defended the law, and themselves by the law ; encouraged and rewarded hireling doctors to maintain that his will was above law, nay itself the highest law, and binding upon the consciences of his subjects, on pain of eternal damnation ; and that such as resisted his lawless will, resisted God. and were guilty of impiety and rebellion. He robbed cities of their charters, the public of its money and liberty, and treated his free-born subjects as slaves born only to obey him.

It is said that he was not a papist ; perhaps he was not, that is, not a subject to the Pope of Rome ; but he was bent upon setting up a hierarchy in England, resembling that of Rome in all its power and terrors. Nor does it avail, if men are to be persecuted and oppressed for their conscience, whether they suffer from the tyranny of a Hildebrand, a Luther, or a Laud. All persecuting religions are alike terrible to those who alike hate or dread all persecuting religions. It is certain, that of all the dissenters, none but the Papists had any mercy shewn them, and these were in high favour.

It is also certain, that for all these exorbitances he underwent much affliction, and a severe lot afterwards, from men too who had no sort of right to inflict it. But they did by power, as he once had done, used it wantonly, and without mercy or law. This I candidly own : but your Lordship, who strongly represent his fate, says nothing of his crimes ; and surely oppression and usurpation are great ones, and big with all crimes : crimes of which that unhappy Prince seems not to have had a true sense, if any : nor is his repentance apparent, though God knows he had abundant cause for it. Here therefore is a powerful objection against his sincerity ; since it does not appear that he was struck with

any sense of his guilt. Can a man be said to own his fault, who justifies himself, and seems conscious of his innocence ?

It would have been but fair in your Lordship, to have shewn his errors and evil doings, as well as his sufferings. The former you scarcely touch, and therefore are an advocate, not an instructor.

In your second paragraph there is a doctrinal passage which seems to deserve some attention : You tell us, *to fear the Lord*, means, to us Christians, “ To believe and practise the doctrines and duties taught by Christ in the scriptures, or by his ministers agreeably thereto.” I thought it had been enough to believe and practise them as taught by him ; that all farther authority was needless ; and that submitting to the deductions of the clergy from thence, or to their paraphrases upon these, was no part of our duty. If such deductions or explanations appear to us true and rational, we must believe them though they came from a layman ; if we think them false or partial, will your Lordship say, that we are to believe them, because they come from the clergy ?

I beg your pardon, my Lord, if I mistake your meaning. But in your words there seems to lurk a sort of latent claim of right in the clergy to interpret the scriptures authoritatively. If you mean so, nothing is more dangerous, or untrue : If you mean no such thing, why do you add, *or by his ministers agreeably thereto* ? Who are to judge of this agreeableness ? If their hearers, if the laity be the judges, then such words were needlessly added, and stand for nothing ; and there is an end of all church authority, and of any pretence to it. But if the clergy be both to interpret, and to judge for others, then there is an end of all liberty, of all judgment and conscience amongst men, and the clergy are all so many Popes, infallible and irresistible ; which I presume your Lordship will not say ; and shall be glad to hear you talk clearly upon this subject, of itself clear enough, but often darkened and wrested by design.

Your Lordship tells us, (p. 6.) that “ to fear the king, is to obey him——that is in a limited and legal government, to observe the laws——and that this is the certain rule of obedience, which leaves all men without excuse, who pretend ignorance.” This is true. But did not this very rule leave king Charles I. also without excuse ? For, if he were to be exempted from the rule, your just distinction of a limited and legal government had been absurd. He therefore having the laws for his guides, sinned against knowledge : nor, had he been ignorant, would it have excused him ; since it was his duty to inform himself. Nor is my lord Clarendon’s plea of his ignorance, a good plea. Besides, I think the king declared at his trial, that he understood law as well as most private gentlemen in England.

Your Lordship, repeating again the words of your text, tells us, that “ we are advised by it not to mix, or familiarly converse with such as are given to change, lest we be seduced by them to idolatry,” &c. An advice entirely applicable to that king, though your Lordship makes no such application. It was from him, and his evil counsellors, the change began. Why did he converse with such ; why did he nourish and employ them ? Why was he governed by them ? Why did he listen to them more than to the voice of his duty, and of the laws ? Had not his Popish queen, weak and bigotted as she was, prodigious

influence over him ? Had he not Popish ministers of state, Popish counsellors ? And had he not about him hot-headed and arbitrary bishops, continually instigating him to innovations ? So that had he observed this, or any sober advice, he must have banished all the Papists from his court, and all other parasites, ecclesiastical and civil.

Your Lordship well observes, That one of the best preservatives against vices of all kinds, is to avoid bad company ; for that there is a strange contagion in ill example. But you have not told us how much king Charles I. was corrupted and misled by bad company, by arbitrary ministers, and flattering prelates. Very true likewise is what you say, that " there is a specious outside in every vice, which flatters our senses, and is but too agreeable to one or other of our passions." But the application of this truth to that prince is again forgot. Were not the principles of lawless rule dressed up to him in very alluring colours, and was he not entirely misled by them ?

Every vice, you say, has its party, who dress it up in the most attracting colours, and represent its opposite virtue to the greatest disadvantage : you add, that vice, in their account of it, is sociable and good natured ; 'tis manliness, good-breeding, pleasure, and liberty. Now, my Lord, (after I have assured your Lordship, that I never heard any of my acquaintance make any such encomiums upon vice) give me leave to ask, what is a more horrid, a more complicated vice, than lawless power ; than abrogating the laws, and robbing nations of their liberty and rights ? Did not king Charles do this ? Was not violent power his darling ? Was he not bewitched with the wicked doctrines that support it ? Were not these doctrines recommended in the most pleasing lights, and even in the name of the Lord ? Was it not become the common theme of the pulpit, especially in the king's pulpit, to represent servitude as duty, and tyranny as the ordinance of God ?

These observations, my Lord, fell naturally in your way ; and why you made them not, you can best tell. But, to apply to the king what your Lordship applies to vice : he found in the end, that all such representations in favour of unlawful power, were mere delusion ; that the pleasures he was flattered with, were false pleasures ; sweet indeed in the mouth, but all bitterness within ; that no two things are at a wider distance, than lawful power, and power usurped ; that submission to the laws is the most perfect freedom ; and that those flatterers and preachers, who seduced him from his oath and his duty, whilst they promised him monarchy without controul, were themselves aiming at uncontrouled power over the monarch.

Thus they dazzled him with the lustre of power, and he blind pursued it ; till, by grasping at too much, he risked, and at last lost the whole.

What you say further of men given to change, page 7, is too general, and may serve for any party, and any time ; but may be very justly applied to that king and his counsellors ; as, " That they acted from motives of avarice or ambition, from disappointment or revenge, or to mend a bad fortune—from vanity and self-conceit, from a levity and fickleness of temper, from a scheming head, and a love of innovating in religion and government for innovating sake, &c."

What follows is true in some measure, but very loose and declamatory. If, for example, " some men are against whatever is uppermost

and seem to dislike what is established, merely because it is so ;” are there not others, who know no other reason for liking what is established, but purely because it is established ? Are there not some who have particular and large interest and advantages in being for the establishment, and must seem either to like the thing, or lose the pay ? And will they not always have something very plausible to urge in favour and defence of their gain ?

“ What religion, you ask, what establishment of religion ; what church in any country is so perfect, as not to leave room for finding fault ?” Give me leave to say, my Lord, that the less room there is, the better it is ; and that if there be any faults, they ought rather to be mended than defended. This I presume your Lordship will allow ; and I should likewise be obliged, if you would please to inform me, whether the clergy have ever been remarkable for mending their own faults, or for thanking others for mending them, or even suffering them to do it. I doubt it will be found, that wherever religion has been defaced or debauched, it was the clergy who did it ; that wherever religion has been reformed, it was the laity that reformed it. “ In the opinion of religious men, (says Sir Francis Bacon,) the church never wants reforming : as if castles and houses might want repair, but chappels and churches never do.” The use I would make of this is, that we cannot always depend upon the word of the clergy, whether the established church, any where, be perfect or defective, or how far she is so.

Your Lordship goes on to ask, what forms of “ words so compleat and unexceptionable ; what discipline so well framed, or so well executed ; what system of faith and doctrine so wisely drawn up ; where a national clergy so well qualified for virtue and learning, so pious, so prudent in the discharge of their offices, as to leave no place for exceptions, for objections, for scruples, for censure, for reproach ?” I doubt, no where ; and if churchmen and churches be thus imperfect, thus fallible and frail, every man must be left at perfect liberty to leave them wholly, or to join with them in part, as to himself seems most rational and fitting : every man ought to be free to discourse or write concerning these churches and churchmen whatever he judges fit ; to urge his objections, to defend his own different opinions, if he has any, and to propose amendments where he thinks he sees faults. To deprive him of this liberty, would be unjust and unchristian ; since his conforming against inclination is hypocrisy ; and surely the clergy would not commit such a heinous sin, as to make or encourage hypocrites : and if he conform by choice, he wants no other motive.

What therefore can be said for arch-bishop Laud, and the clergy of that time, who plagued and persecuted all men (but the papists) for not submitting blindly to their arbitrary and selfish injunctions as to so many institutions ? Were not they the men given to change, to a change fatal to conscience and civil liberty ? And is not this the natural result of blending power unnaturally with religion, which resides wholly in the soul, is the effect only of conviction, and can never be subject to force ? Nor was it the only time when religion was banished, to make room for the hierarchy.

It is very true what your Lordship says, that no forms of words, no systems can please all men. This you ascribe to the love of change.

My Lord, I will give you a reason worth a thousand of yours. In matters of religion, all men have a right to judge for themselves ; and as the variation and difference in the opinion of men is endless and infinite, the sentiments of some men can never be the sentiments of all men ; and 'tis notable folly to aim at fixing a general standard of thinking ; and notable wickedness and tyranny to force men to submit to it. Do they who compose such systems and forms, maintain that they are all derived from the word of God, and virtually contained in it ? Then he who believes the word of God, believes these ; and this would be sufficient, if the composers meant no more. The truth is, (and your Lordship knows it well) that their meaning has too often been to subject men not to Christ's authority, but to their own.

Can no systems, no forms, please all men ? What then is to be done ? Even to leave all men at full liberty to take them, or to reject them. Knows your Lordship a better, or indeed any other Christian rule ? We all know that Christian rules and ecclesiastical rules, have often been very different, in truth, very opposite things. Neither is your reasoning just, when you arraign the people, especially the bulk of the people, with being addicted to change in matters of religion. I believe the truth is on the other side ; and that they are rather apt to be persevering and obstinate, as in all their habits, so particularly in their religious habits, be the same right or wrong ; as the clergy themselves, when such habits do not please them, are apt to contend. They therefore who would force or persuade the people into new forms, or out of their old forms, are the men given to change. Pray, who are they that have every where or any where introduced changes and adulterations in religion ? Who are they, who in too many countries have converted religion into a monster ? Not the people, 'tis well known ; your Lordship knows it well. At one time, and indeed for several ages, Christianity was almost lost in the world ; lost in the gross forgeries and impostures of the priests. Or if it was found any where, it was chiefly found amongst the Albigenses and Waldenses, who had no priests at all, at least none pampered with wealth, and intoxicated with power. Let others declare, whether if our clergy do less harm, than in popish countries the clergy do, and observe some circumspection, such their behaviour and forbearance be owing to our constitution, to the spirit of the legislature, or to their own spirit. What changes, what dangerous and ridiculous changes were made, or attempted, by Laud and his brethren, I shall take notice by and by.

As to forms and ceremonies, 'tis certain, that if they are about things indifferent, 'tis a shame to argue in their defence with such men as think them sinful, and consequently not indifferent. 'Tis as certain, that whatever is not really a part of religion, ought to be kept out of the church ; not only for fear of offence, though even this be a good reason : but for fear of creating superstition in the common people, who will for ever take whatever is joined to religion, to be part of religion, though declared over and over again to be matter of indifference. To multiply therefore such causes of superstition, is sinful and scandalous. wherever 'tis done ; and Laud and his adherents were continually doing it, to the seducing of many, and to the disgusting of more. Are there no forms of words, no systems, that can please all men ? Surely there are not : and this perhaps is an unanswerable

reason against imposing such forms and systems upon men. To impose them upon such as dislike them, is notorious tyranny, and altogether antichristian.

Were I to pursue this subject, it would lead me into many reflections. Give me just leave to say, that where there is the least grimace and pomp, and human contrivances in religion, especially in a country of much light and liberty, like ours, there the fewest handles are given for upbraiding or ridiculing the clergy, who can expect no other whilst such handles subsist. I might add, that the surest way to preserve and perpetuate the power of religion, is to restore religion to its original simplicity. But even to gain this great and valuable end, I am for no violence, no sudden changes, no altering foundations, or shaking the constitution, or for changing the frame of the church, or for withdrawing her revenue. Nor do I know any such terrible men as your Lordship suggests to be bent upon any such change. And considering that I think the pretender's game to be altogether desperate, I cannot foresee any change so fatal as that which the vast increase of the clergy's property, must one day, if it go on, certainly make. This I think demonstrable from figures. I am not sure that this is a change which troubles or alarms your Lordship——You will not surely reply, that there are many clergymen and their livings very poor. My Lord, there are also many excessively rich. Why does not the wealthy brother support the poor? The truth is, they must be all excessively rich, and the laity excessively poor, if the scheme goes on for a course of years. Will not this be a change, a terrible change in the constitution? And who are the men given to such a change?

In page 3, you tell us of the force of enthusiasm, how easily enthusiasts are seduced, how apt to think their cause “the cause of God, which allows no delays, admits of no restraints; times and places, and persons and things must all give way to what the enthusiast calls the work of God, &c.” All this is very true; and what then? Were there no enthusiasts at that time, or since, but the sectaries? Your Lordship must know better, and it had been but fair to have owned it. Have not many churchmen been notable enthusiasts, possessed with very foolish and very false notions, which they themselves took to be so many divine truths? Indeed, every hot-headed man, who takes the heat in his head to be religion, is an enthusiast. Nor did I ever know any party in religion, established or not established, but what had enthusiasts amongst them; and I have known as vehement enthusiasts in our own church as in any. Whoever places sanctity in names and trifles, is an enthusiast. Whoever reverences sounds, or postures, or colours, is one. Whoever thinks that worldly power is necessary to religion, is one. Whoever would hurt another for any religious opinion, is one, let him call that opinion by as odious names as he pleases, even heresy or schism, or even deism. Whoever applies the judgments of God to others, that is, calls their misfortunes by the name of divine judgments, is an arrant enthusiast if he be in earnest, and worse if he be not. In short, whoever builds upon religion any superstructure of his own, and then contends for it as a real part of religion, is an enthusiast; as is he who sees holiness in things inanimate and irrational, or thinks that holiness can be conveyed into such, whether the same be earth, or walls, or garments, or appellations.

But I hope I need not to prove to your Lordship that there have been madmen, that is enthusiasts, of the church, and for the church, in all times. No man knows it better than you. Pray what was archbishop Laud, bishop Cosins, and the other innovators and persecutors of this very time about which you now preach? If they were not enthusiasts, fierce and raving enthusiasts, they were much worse; and the best apology that can be made for them is, that they were stark mad. Did they not contend that all their forms and religious curiosities, with all their various ecclesiastical heraldry, were of divine right, even their deans and chapters, even their chancellors, arch-deacons, and even their miserable bishop's courts? And did not they make men swear to this? Did they not frame oaths with an *& cetera*, that no man might have a possibility of not being perjured? Did they not make a canon, obliging all the clergy of Scotland to swear to a liturgy which was not then made, nor till a year afterwards?

These are changes which in your harangue against men given to change, you take no notice of; though to me they seem terrible and impious changes. These are enthusiasts whom you have not mentioned, nor seem to have meant. These were enthusiasts with power, formidable enthusiasts. "To serve God, they trampled upon all the laws of God and man;" to use your Lordship's words. And I agree with your Lordship, that it is very afflicting (I cannot say with you, that 'tis very surprising; for 'tis too common) "to see what a frenzy of enthusiasm poor ignorant men have been worked up to, by specious pretences to a purer religion, or a more exalted devotion, through a blind zeal to advance what they call the kingdom of Christ." It is indeed afflicting, to see men such ready dupes to delusion and deluders. Just such enthusiasm have we all seen, just such frenzy raised, by a blind zeal for the church; and 'tis this very zeal, blind indeed, which has more than once filled above half the nation with religious fury. The very day, my Lord, which you celebrate by this sermon, has been abused to raise that fury, abused to revive and perpetuate religious rage and strife. I wish that the abuse were at an end. I must again use your Lordship's words, to say, that "what makes this the more afflicting, is, that they are worked up to this madness by men who do not believe themselves a word of what they say, by men who are themselves the vilest hypocrites, void of all true virtue and religion."

Your Lordship proceeds, and says, that "When such men cannot ruin the established religion this way, then they set up for zealous asserters of the rights of subjects in religious matters." The asserting the right of the subject in religious matters, is, I hope, no mark of enthusiasm, nor infers that he who does so, aims at misleading enthusiasts. This I know well, that when Laud and his followers then and since, drove at aggrandizing themselves, at settling strict and universal uniformity, that is to say, church tyranny, they set up for zealous asserters of the rights of the crown, and gave it such rights as it never had, at the expense of the law, and even of the word of God, upon which they always fathered all their most impious inventions. Their flattery to the crown was monstrously insidious and impudent. For, whilst they freely complimented it with the liberty and property of the laity, they were themselves daily undermining it, and robbing it of its most valuable prerogatives and strength.

This observation has likewise escaped your Lordship, though it was so very obvious. If fault was then found with the teachers of religion, it was not because they taught, but for what they taught, which God knows was faulty and wicked enough. What you say about crying up the law of nature (which, by the way, our Saviour never cried down) and about infidelity, is not applicable to those times, which claim a very different character ; and I fancy your Lordship means the times present ; how justly, I shall consider by and by, as also how men contract a dislike to the church and churchmen. Let me here just humbly represent, that throwing at random the charge of infidelity, has ever been a practice too common with those of your cloth ; and such of them as have been the loudest in that charge, were generally the warmest advocates for priestcraft. For, that there has been, and is priestcraft in the world, your Lordship, I presume, will not deny.

There is another proposition of yours quite too general, and, I doubt not, true ; “ That men who are of a restless, turbulent, factious temper, with respect to government, are always ready to join in their complaints against the religion established, and in their endeavours to seduce men from it.” Your Lordship, more zealous than cautious in asserting just what serves your present purpose, forgets that for these forty years, ever since the revolution, most of those who were the most restless, the most turbulent, the most factious against the government, have been noted for rigid churchmanship, distinguished by their attempts to advance the power and interest of the church. Such were king William’s greatest enemies, such the late king’s, and such the present king’s. Were not the members of the famous French league all zealots to Popery ? So far were they from seducing men from it, that they destroyed all who were not for it. Yet that league was a terrible faction combined against that government, all strictly of the established church, yet bent against the established government ; and they pursued their wicked ends, not by endeavouring to ruin, but to advance and aggrandize the established church.

Whether “ the greatest strength of the government ever did, and ever will lie in the fidelity and affection of the members of the established church,” as your Lordship roundly affirms, I shall now a little consider : and first allow me to say, that this is oddly affirmed. It is no more than affirming, that as most of the nation are members of the established church, they will be the strongest support of the government, as long as they are faithful and affectionate to the government. My Lord, have they always been so ? Did the late king find them so ? And did he not find, does not his present majesty find that the dissenters have been universally so ? My Lord, pardon me for saying, that it is a wild assertion, that monarchy cannot stand without the church. What proof is there of this, but that they once fell together ; and it was the church that in effect pulled down the monarchy. This surely is a bad argument, that the monarchy is altogether supported by the church. Does not our monarchy subsist in North Britain, where Presbytery is established ? And do not the Presbyterians there, as they and other dissenters do here, heartily adhere to our civil government ; when almost all the churchmen there, and too many of them here, have been zealous to destroy it ?

If Presbyterians formerly, and other dissenters, opposed the crown, it was evidently because the crown, miscounselled by the bishops, oppressed them, cruelly oppressed them ; and oppression will make a wise man mad. When they were not oppressed, they never resisted ; and have ever been steady to every administration that protected them. Can your Lordship say the same of churchmen ? Have not churchmen rebelled, without provocation or oppression, or any ill usage, merely from an intemperate spirit of pride and power ? The endless enterprizes of prelates against the crown make a great part of our history : and even long since the reformation, the wise, candid, and famous father Paul expresses great fear for the crown of England from the power and claims of the bishops : he says, " he sees the horse bridled and saddled, and just ready to be mounted by his old rider." Even in the pious reign about which you preach, the supremacy of the crown was boldly denied by the clergy ; and archbishop Laud had intimidated the judges from granting prohibitions, though the judges could not, without perjury, refuse such prohibitions. What regard, thinks your Lordship, had this great prelate to conscience, and consequently to the salvation of souls, or even to the monarchy ? What regard had the judges, even in this instance, to their oath and duty ? Those very judges of whom you speak so well, nay so kindly ?

How is it, my Lord, that the church only can support the government ? Is it by her doctrines of obedience ? All our dissenters profess the same doctrines to princes that protect them ; and have never yet falsified their professions. Can churchmen boast as much ? These have indeed infatuated some of our princes with extravagant notions of power and obedience. But did they ever stand the trial themselves ? No ; none ever resisted more fiercely ; sometimes without one blow, or any just offence given them. These mad doctrines are therefore not to be relied on : If they had, king James II. who weakly trusted to them, might have died in his throne : and in paying a just and legal obedience, all sects amongst us concur. Nor will any prince who is not as weak as king James, and, like him deluded by priests, trust to any other obedience. Were the dissenters once against the king ? I have given the reason. Nor does it from thence follow, that they are not hearty friends to the government. The churchmen were once against Parliaments ; is therefore the church to be charged with being against the government ?

I use the word *church* in the sense which you and all the clergy use it ; a sense which has prevailed through custom, but is indeed impertinent and unjust. For, your Lordship knows, that the word *church* is never used either in the Old or New Testament, to mean the bishops or priests alone, but generally intends the whole assembly of the faithful, and often means the people alone without the priest or minister. But the clergy have every where usurped it to themselves, against all truth, and served their own ends notably by it.

Your Lordship's reasoning about government, page 9, is mostly true ; but the application is again either quite dropped, or very defective and partial. You say it is a very complicated question, What species of government is best for the people, &c. ? Without entering into this enquiry, I am convinced that our own is the best for us ; namely, a king and Parliament, the people represented, the laws inviolable, and

the only standard of power and liberty. Now who departed first from this excellent frame? Was it not the king, and the clergy who governed the king? Your Lordship would not surely have found it a very complicated question, Whether governors keep or break known laws? That king Charles did so is fact, and a fact that it would have become your Lordship to have owned. You own that men given to change may urge plausible things in their own behalf, though such a change is sure to throw things into confusion: I ask again, Who began the change? And whether, since a violation of the laws naturally ends in confusion, and indeed brings it, opposition to such violence may not produce order, and has not sometimes done it, though not always? That king had plausible things said for him, and for his arbitrary government: his necessities were urged; laws were pretended to justify his breach of law, and he was said to be the viceroy of God, whilst he was acting like a very bad man. But about these things your Lordship is intirely silent.

What follows is chiefly haranguing, and may be turned any way, but chiefly against that king; though I intirely acquit your Lordship from intending it. What you say about seducers and inflamers, is also too confined. It becomes a spirit of truth and peace to expose all seducers, and all incendiaries at all times: was king Charles's reign and court free from them? Was the church free from them? Whilst we remember the enthusiasm and violence that followed, let us not forget the domination, the superstition, and high-church fanaticism that went before, and seem to have begot and introduced the other. I think it manifest, that till the church and the crown had begun a change, no other change was thought of: and whoever begins any mischief, is, in a great measure, answerable for the whole.

Whilst your Lordship was inveighing, with becoming warmth, against inflamers, innovators, and the like pests of government, it would have been no digression to have observed, how much the martyr's court was infested with such; that more especially parasites (and the worst of all, spiritual parasites) were the bane of his reign, and even of our constitution; that perhaps one of the greatest defects in our government, has been its tameness, in suffering the clergy to preach the people out of their liberties; as was their practice during the reigns of all the Stuarts.

Perhaps it were too much to wish that you had likewise warned us, to be upon our guard against a body of men continually pursuing selfish and separate advantages: men who have often with deceitful words seduced princes from their duty, engaged them in acts of violence, and consecrated even their iniquities; men who have sometimes pursued their point even to extremity, and to the subversion of public liberty, in order to share with the deluded prince in his violence, yet cloaked all their unhallowed doings under the name of the Lord. Who have so often as they (to use your Lordship's words) "been watching for a change, and lain in wait to deceive, and to seduce the people from the obedience which both reason and religion taught them to be due to the higher powers?"——Since there is no knowing where to stop, or what extravagance they may be gradually worked to in following the seduction of such guides."——I add, guides, such as Laud and his brethren, who were never quiet till they had "carried things to extre-

nity, and subverted the constitution." They too, my Lord, had their specious pretences in the midst of their evil pursuits, and talked of God's true religion, of asserting the rights of the church and monarchy, of suppressing schism; "and that they intended nothing, if you would believe them, but the true service of God and the king." So that the sectaries afterwards wanted not a pretence for their pious cant and violent measures.

There is the more reason for reviving these truths, (for truths they are, as certain as any in history) for that most of the sermons on this occasion have been nothing else but confident apologies for all the notorious usurpations of the court and the clergy; and the preachers generally either boldly defend them, or deny them, or are silent about them. I could wish your Lordship had been more candid and explicit upon the same subject. You dwell upon the consequences of the war, and the change, the violent change which it produced; and labour to raise the passions of your hearers and readers against one side only. The excesses, the provocations, the continued enormities of the other side, which occasioned the rest, you hardly touch; and when you do, 'tis with a gentle and palliative hand.

My Lord, I who have no reserves, and love a fair representation of things, can see and confess wicked counsels, hypocrisy, execrable measures, and flagrant breach of trust on both sides: I own that the king and the clergy had hard and cruel usage; that he was destroyed by a faction; that the laws were abolished, and a tyranny set up: but still, from whence are we to trace the first cause? And did it not begin from the court and the clergy? Hence proceeded the first distrust, and breach of union and confidence between the king and his people: hence arose the first aversion to the churchmen: and, as it was the monarch who created a disgust to monarchy, it was the insolent spirit of churchmen that made the church odious.

Your Lordship justly detests the murder of the king: so do I. But I likewise detest the murder of the constitution, which he and his counsellors had for many years trampled upon, and endeavoured to overturn for ever. One of the uses therefore to be made of the day is, to expose lawless rule, flattering counsels, an aspiring and corrupt priesthood, with the danger and sin of violating public trust, and abusing power.

Your Lordship "will not say that there had been no occasion given by the court for jealousies and fears." How tenderly spoken; when the law was actually preached down, when the king's will was preached up as the only law; when no man obnoxious to the court had the benefit of law; when the liberties and properties of all men were subjected to the caprice and passion of one. My Lord, he had been guilty of as many public violences, as his son king James was afterwards, and continued them much longer.

Your Lordship will not say, that "there was not sufficient reason for opposition in a parliamentary way." Had he not laid aside parliaments? laid them aside for twelve years together? Had he not made it penal even to talk of parliaments? Nor does it at all appear, that he ever intended to call another, till the distresses brought upon him by his wanton conduct, and by the wise advice of the bishops, (who involved him in a war with his own people for words and forms, and the

violent establishment of prelacy in Scotland) forced him to it. Nay, I think it apparent, that he very early meditated to rule like his brother of France ; at least, that this bad spirit was infused into him by his traiterous counsellors, and particularly animated by the bishops and clergy. But I avoid, as your Lordship does, to enter minutely into the history of those unhappy times, though perhaps not for the same reason. I only ask your Lordship, suppose he had never called a parliament, what would have been the adviseable remedy, what the method of opposition then ?

You say, " That whatever wrong measures had been taken, which might endanger the liberties of the subject," (my Lord, this very soft language no wise represents the excesses of that reign) " what was most offensive of that kind," (still very tender) " was by the advice of his council, &c." So were the worst of king James's measures ; so are the measures of the Great Turk, and of every tyrant and usurper in the world. It is too true, that the worst kings, the greatest oppressors, will ever find complaisant and officious counsellors, and the most wicked measures find parricides to defend them. Had not Nero, had not Caligula, ministers and instruments, as barbarous as themselves, to justify all their barbarities, and even to advise and inspire them ? Have not all the most bloody tyrants that ever plagued and afflicted men, found such impious counsellors and defenders ? Indeed, had there never been any such wicked advisers and instruments, there never could have been such mischievous and pernicious princes.

You add (very surprisingly) " with the concurrence of his judges, judges in general of good character, and well esteemed in their profession," I cannot help thinking that this account is extremely amazing from your Lordship. My Lord, they were public traitors, enemies to their country, the hirelings of power, wretches who sanctified by the name of Law, as many of the clergy did by the name of Christ, the most complicated wickedness under the sun, that of overturning all law human and divine, and of enslaving a whole people. It avails not what sufficiency they had in the knowledge of the law, farther than to condemn them ; nor does it avail what has been said to their advantage, nor what your Lordship says, since facts the most notorious contradict it. Will your Lordship say thus much of king James's judges ? And did king James's judges go greater lengths to legitimate lawless power and oppression ? Amongst them too there were able men ; they were therefore the more inexcusable. The truth is, both these princes seem to have considered their judges as the machines and champions of usurpation, as the abandoned instruments of cancelling law by chicanery.

What your Lordship labours next, is to vindicate the sincerity of the king's intentions in his declarations and concessions, " to govern for the future by the known laws of the land, and to maintain the just rights and privileges of parliaments." I have already taken some notice how sincere he was, and how much his actions contradicted his declarations. He had already contradicted over and over, all his professions to former parliaments ; he had manifested such an affection for lawless power, and such a settled intention to introduce it, such a fondness for the promoters of it, and such dislike of all other men and measures ; that it was no wonder his last Parliament was loth to trust

him, and for guarding themselves with all possible securities against a relapse into their former bondage. And I doubt his readiness in his concessions, was no proof of a purpose to observe them. They still remembered how wantonly he had broke his coronation oath, the bill of rights, and all the ties of law, seized their properties, and imprisoned their persons. And all his compliance seemed only the effect of distress, all his other resources having failed him ; nor had he recourse to Parliament till violence, and power, and stratagems, and every scheme of support from any other quarter, had miscarried ; and he conformed to old ways, when new would no longer do.

This seemed to be the opinion of the Parliament, and this the ground of their distrust. They remembered his professions to former Parliaments, and how little his actions had corresponded with these his professions ; how he had insulted parliaments when he thought he could subsist, however lawlessly, without them ; how wantonly he had dissolved them, how barbarously he had used their persons after such dissolution, a dissolution called by my lord Clarendon, *unreasonable, unskilful, and precipitate*. These jealousies, my Lord, possessed the whole Parliament, at least a great majority ; and some concurring accidents terribly heightened them, particularly his supposed tampering with the army in the north, and the Irish massacre. Yet amongst all these alarms, which your Lordship must allow to have had great weight, there seems not the least view, (I think 'tis plain there was not) in that assembly, to abolish the monarchy, or to introduce a new government. It was composed of many great and able men, who all concurred in putting restraints upon the king, such as he might not be able to break through. What events followed no man then foresaw, or could foresee. A war ensued, and on both sides there appeared considerable men.

Yet the great men who adhered to the king, though they thought the Parliament too violent, seem to have had no confidence in him, that he meant well to the constitution : and it was probably owing to such their distrust of his humour and designs, that after the battle of Edge-hill, where he had the advantage on his side, they did not proceed to London, where he might have had a chance for being master. They who gave him good counsel at Oxford, found but cold countenance there, and some of them were disgraced. Nor could he ever prevail upon the members whom he had drawn thither, and called his Parliament, to declare the Parliament at Westminster rebels, though this was a point which he had much at heart, and laboured hard, and complained heavily of his disappointment ; nay, reviled them by the name of his *Mungril Parliament*. The fate of the excellent lord Falkland, his principal Secretary of State, deserves notice, and seems to have proceeded from his utter despair of seeing a good issue from either side. And, if I remember right, it appears even from my lord Clarendon, that the concessions which the king made, proceeded from no purpose to observe them.

What your Lordship says of the king's adherents, is not conclusive. If they were of the nobility and gentry, and men of fortune ; so were those of the other side, especially till the army desperately and wickedly assumed the government to themselves. What followed was indeed infamous and horrible, the murder of the king, and a military

overnment. Cromwel was a notorious hypocrite and usurper, and chly deserved the fate which he made the king suffer.

Your Lordship seems likewise to fail in the last proof which you ter of the king's sincerity and good intentions, namely, his Christian rtitude at his death.

My Lord, this reasoning will justify those who doomed him to die. Did not the Regicides meet death with great intrepidity, some of them ith raptures? Do not almost all enthusiasts die so, even the most iminal and bloody, even traitors and assassins? I think the goodness f his intentions had been more clear, had he fairly owned the many rievous iniquities of his reign, his oppressions and arbitrary rule. ut we see in this, as in other instances, the great partiality of men to emselves and their own actions, and how little their opinion ought to eigh in such cases. Cardinal Richlieu, who had done a thousand acts f violence and injustice, saw at his death no guilt in any part of his fe, especially as a minister. Did not the earl of Strafford, who had een a great oppressor of public liberty, and of his country: did not ch-bishop Laud, a hot-headed monk, who had caused so much vio- nce and confusion, both die with clear consciences? Nay, did not ortz, baron Gortz, the most barbarous villain that ever counselled or rved a prince, he who had served his master the late king of Sweden t the most merciless measures, and indeed advised them; go to his ecution, not only without any reproach from his own heart, but even raising himself? These wicked men valued themselves upon their yalty to their prince. But execrable, and infamous, and inconsistent hat loyalty which misleads princes, and ruins their people.

In your vindication of the kings adherents, your Lordship is again o loose, and you say many things at random.

To what you say against Cromwel, and against the violence and hy-ocrisy of his agents, I have no objection; only that the style seems ot to resemble that of a sermon. I should however have thought you npartial, had you shewn the like warmth against the first authors of ar confusions. Some of your language is applicable enough to the utter: " 'There was so much injustice, violence, and oppression; so uch arbitrariness and cruelty in their proceedings, accompanied with e vilest hypocrisy and falsehood: '———for law and religion, my ord, were still pretended by Laud and his faction, even whilst they ere oppressing justice and conscience.

You just confess, that " the indiscreet zeal of the friends of the church, and the severity with which they pressed a compliance in hings indifferent, or of small consequence, upon persons of different persuasions, whose aversion to a compliance increased in proportion o the zeal with which it was pressed, prepared fuel for that unhappy ire." This is mentioned in a very temperate style, though as proper i topic as any in your Sermon, to have been opened and explained ith warmth and indignation. My Lord, do these few cold words ake a proper picture of that violent and arbitrary time? What your ordship thinks, I know not; nor do you perhaps care what I think bout it. Let us leave it to our impartial readers.

I have before answered what you repeat and dwell upon; namely, at the king could not have fallen, had the church stood.

You say, that they who ruined the church, had for their pretence pure religion, and a further reformation. Had there no ground been furnished for such a pretence? Was there no need of some reformation, when the clergy were, (very many of them) going back every day to Popery, and ruining all their brethren who would not go back with them? Were they not daily introducing Popery, the most dreadful part of Popery, its terrible power, its vindictive and intolerating spirit? Perhaps they meant not to restore the Pope: but the superstition of Popery was increasing every day, as also the pomp of Popery, with persecution, the most dreadful engine of Popery. Arch-bishop Laud was already affecting the title of Holiness, and Most holy Father. The books of Papists were licensed by his chaplains, or approved by himself: new books against Popery were by him forbid to be printed; some such already printed were called in: passages against Popery were struck out in others. The best Protestant books of long standing, and formerly published by authority, were not suffered to be reprinted, not even Fox's famous Acts and Monuments, a common-place book to Protestants of their sufferings and burnings under Queen Mary, and of the Popish cruelties then and before. The very *Practice of Piety*, a Protestant book, which had gone through six-and-thirty editions, was not permitted to be reprinted. Bishop Wren put this extraordinary article amongst those of his visitation, "That the churchwardens in every parish of his diocese, should enquire whether any persons presumed to talk of religion at their tables, or in their families." It was made one of the articles against bishop Williams, that he had said, "He did not allow the priests to jeer, nor to make invectives against the people." It was another article against him, "That he had wickedly jested on St. Martin's hood:" and it was another article against him, "That he had said, that the people are God's and the king's, and not the priest's people;" though for this he quoted a national council. Poor Gillebrand an almanack maker, was prosecuted by the archbishop in the High Commission Court, for leaving the names of the old Popish saints out of his calendar, and inserting in their room, the names of the Protestant martyrs. Bishop Cosins of Durham, caused three hundred wax candles to be lighted up in the church on candlemas-day in honour of our lady: he forbade any psalms to be sung before or after sermon, but instead of psalms, an anthem in praise of the three kings of Colen. He declared in the pulpit, that when our reformers abolished the mass, they took away all good order. He said that the king had no more power over the church, than the boy that rubbed his horse's heels. For the clergy had then assumed to themselves the regal supremacy; and as the crown had taken it from the Pope, who had usurped it, they had usurped it now from the crown, to the disgrace of the king, the subversion of the constitution, and to their own shame, and even perjury.

To all this, which your Lordship's silence has given me occasion to say on this head, give me leave to add the unquestionable testimony of the judicious and excellent Lord Falkland, in his speech concerning the bishops and their adherents. "It seemed, says he, their work to try how much of a Papist might be brought in without Popery, and to destroy as much as they could of the gospel, without bringing themselves into danger of being destroyed by the law.—Some of them

have so industriously laboured to deduce themselves from Rome, that they have given great suspicion, that in gratitude they desire to return thither, or at least to meet it half way. Some have evidently laboured to bring in an English, though not a Roman Popery : I mean not only the outside and dress of it, but equally absolute, a blind dependence of the people upon the clergy, and of the clergy upon themselves ; and have opposed the Papacy beyond the sea, that they might settle one beyond the water, (namely, at Lambeth.) Nay, common fame, is more than ordinarily false, if none of them have found a way to reconcile the opinions of Rome to the preferences of England ; and be so absolutely, directly, and cordially Papists, that it is all that fifteen hundred pounds a year can do to keep them from confessing it."—— He had said just before, that " they had first depressed preaching to their power, and next laboured to make it such, as the harm had not been much, if it had been depressed : the most frequent subjects, even in the most sacred auditories, being the divine right of bishops and tythes, the sacredness of the clergy, the sacrilege of impropriations, the demolishing of Puritanism and property, the building the prerogative at St. Paul's ; the introduction of such doctrines, as admitting them true, the truth would not recompense the scandal ; or of such that were so false, that, as Sir Thomas Moore said of the casuists, they served but to inform them how near they might approach to sin, without sinning."

What thinks your Lordship of this picture of those clergy ? Is it not such as seemed to call for a real reformation, and was not the pretence of such as did so well warranted ?

Your Lordship takes notice of the confusions which followed the king's death, as the just judgment of God for it. My Lord, this of God's judgments, is a subject infinitely nice and tender, and ought to be warily touched : nor can I help thinking that you clergymen generally do it too boldly, and even very partially. Judgments are very apt to pursue and overtake your enemies ; but you are not so ready to see any befalling yourselves. The evils that fall to your lot, have generally another name, and are only misfortunes ; but if they happen to those that you dislike, they are judgments. Pray, my Lord, what rule have you in this case to distinguish by ? I know none ; unless he who only sends judgments, and only can tell what are judgments, would inform you. Where he does not inform you, it is at least great rashness, and I think very wicked, to call any calamity befalling others, however terrible it be, by the awful name of a judgment. It is representing them as enemies to God, and therefore exposing them to the abhorrence of men.

Divine judgments have always been the cry and common place of sious impostors, who part not readily with any topic of delusion ; and therefore I am surprised to see your Lordship fall into the same strain.

Was the unsettled state of the nation a judgment upon it for the murder of the king ? And were his misfortunes and fate no judgment upon him, for having abused his trust, and oppressed the nation ? But why should the nation suffer for a fact, which almost the whole nation abhorred ? And why did not this judgment reach those who committed it, and who remained the only men of power and prosperity after it ? Why, particularly, should the church continue cast down, forlorn, and

distressed, for an iniquity abhorred by her, and perpetrated by her enemies? Or had the church never, by any acts of wantonness and injustice formerly, merited such a visitation as might be deemed a judgment? But why should I, if I sin not with another, but avoid and detest sinning, suffer for what he does? And why should he, who is guilty, not suffer, or suffer less than I? Surely this reasoning cannot be sound divinity, since 'tis thus against all logic and sense.

Your Lordship must needs know that it is the way of parties, to throw judgments at one another, with equal bitterness, and equal folly. Whatever happens well to one side, is a blessing; whatever happens ill to the other, is a curse. To us evil is a chastisement, to others 'tis a judgment; and just so say others of us, and of themselves. Is there any misfortune or mischief incident to ill men, from which the good are exempt? Are there any worldly felicities attending the righteous, in which the wicked have no share, or not an equal share? If it be said, that their being wicked, is judgment enough; this argument, besides that it seems to make God the author of their wickedness, is a confession that what they suffer in common with others, cannot be called a judgment.

There is no end of exposing this pious absurdity, though it be easily done; nor yet in reviving it upon every occasion. The best that can be said for it, is bad enough; namely, that like other falsehoods, it serves the turn of angry and interested men; it startles and convinces bigots; it teaches men ignorance, and to hate one another; and it contributes to perpetuate party for ever.—A turn becoming an incendiary and deceiver, but not a messenger of truth and peace. It is therefore very unworthy of your Lordship. And, I dare say, upon reflection, you will condemn it.

Your assertion, "That the judgments of God for great sins may hang over a nation for many generations," is a very bold one, and admits of the same confutation. How hang over a nation? What, over the earth, and stones, and buildings? This your Lordship surely will not say, though things equally absurd are often said by some of your order; and Dr. Trebeck asserts in print, that in places consecrated there is an inherent holiness. Such judgments therefore must hang over the people only.—But suppose another people may have taken possession of the land? Must that new people, who came from another climate, be also visited? If so, they might as well have suffered in their former habitations as in their new settlement: and then all the nations in the universe may suffer for what is done wickedly by, or even in any one of them. But if new comers are not to suffer for the iniquities of the former people, why must this generation, nay, every succeeding generation, be chastised for the sins of the dead, for whom they are no more answerable, than the wild Indians are for the oppressions of the Turks; no more than the Pope of Rome is answerable for the sins of Romulus? As for sinning *ex post facto*, it is a distinction which would involve every man in the errors of every man throughout the world. May not a man, without sinning, approve what really was a sin in him that committed it? He may approve it through misinformation about particular circumstances, or from want of right discernment: neither of which is a sin.

In consequence of your way of reasoning, you must make all the modern and late clergy, who approved Laud's violent doings, guilty of Laud's transgressions.—Nay, all the future clergy of this spirit, must be thus wicked and guilty. As a farther consequence of this sort of doctrine, I should not wonder to hear your Lordship congratulating all good churchmen, and lovers of king Charles I. and his cause, upon the blessing derived to them from the merits of his life and sufferings. According to the rule of just distribution, if some are still cursed for him, why not others blessed for him ?

The next topic of your eloquence is, the dread still remaining from the old republican spirit, which brought that king to the block. Upon this you raise terrors, and assert with your usual strength of style : " All places, you say, are filled with loose books, which tend to nothing but to destroy all principles, and set men free from all government——Republican principles are as industriously propagated now, as they were then, and to the same ends ; to introduce a change of government ; and in order to that, to weaken it, by weakening first the influence of religion, and introducing infidelity : which attempts come chiefly from the republican quarter now, as they did then." And you quote Dr. Burnet, who says, " Many of the republicans began to profess deism, and almost all of them were for destroying all clergymen, pulling down churches, discharging tithes, and for leaving religion without either encouragement or restraint."

My Lord, a profligate clergy has often tempted men to disbelieve religion, whilst they notoriously contradict it in actions, though they loudly professed it with their lips.—I know not but that very time might have unsettled the belief of some, and disposed them to deism. They had seen a domineering Episcopal church demolished ; a Presbyterian church, equally domineering, raised in its room : both professing great holiness, even to be the oracles of God ; both rapacious and insatiable ; merciless to all that differed from them, tyrants to all who submitted to them ; hypocritically disclaiming the world, and confidently grasping after all the power and grandeur in it ; deriving all their wealth and power from the simple gospel of Christ, who disclaimed all power and wealth for himself, and bequeathed them none, but left his example and precepts to all men indifferently, as well as to them. They had seen preachers of the gospel, who never preached it, but rioted by the name and pretence of it ; or, if they preached it at all, preached up themselves : They had seen explainers of the scripture, who never could agree in explaining it, yet obtruding their contradictory explanations upon all others : they had seen ministers who had been persecuted, as soon as they had power, persecuting others ; seen others, who had been persecutors, complain of persecution ; and both sorts ever accommodating their doctrines to their own views and passions, and to the views and passions of such as they were disposed to flatter ; both sorts indifferent, or rather enemies to public and equal liberty ; ever indeed contending for it to themselves when others oppressed them ; ever denying it to such as they had a mind to oppress ; gathering all their doctrines, and all their whims, however selfish, wicked, or foolish, upon the father of wisdom, of mercy, and of truth ; pretending to have the call, and peaceful guidance of the Holy Ghost, yet swayed by the worst and most hostile passions ; talking of Chris-

tian meekness, and the forgiveness of enemies ; indulging fury and vengeance upon every offence, or contradiction ; calling themselves ambassadors of peace, nay, successors to the apostles ; but sowing strife, and doing nothing like the apostles, nay, every thing unlike the apostles ; still boasting that God was with them, and that the gates of hell could not prevail against them, yet frightened at every breath of opposition.

I say, some men seeing all these monstrous inconsistencies, and how small reliance there was upon the veracity, or reasoning of any set of churchmen, might be tempted to think that there was nothing in religion ; because they perceived that the several bands of ecclesiastics had turned religion into a farce and a market, and professed what they seemed not to believe. Others too might be good Christians, yet join with no society of Christians, like Grotius and some others.

Or perhaps after all, there were then no deists, or signs of deism ; but that this charge was invented by priests and bigots, who are always notoriously addicted to forge falsehoods and calumny against those who differ from them in their dreams and forms. Nor indeed does infidelity appear to have been the turn of those times, but rather a humour quite opposite, that of enthusiasm, and of false and austere holiness. I know but of one writer then, who was generally suspected of infidelity, and that was Mr. Hobbes ; no republican, your Lordship well knows, but an advocate for monarchy without bounds. Atheism came not in, at least with any countenance or force, till the restoration. Then it prevailed and grew fashionable, and whatever, or whoever had the look of seriousness and sobriety, grew an object of reproach and ridicule : all kinds of debauchery grew common ; lewdness and riot overspread the whole land. So little was vice suppressed, or virtue promoted by the re-establishment of the church ; nay, many of the clergy behaved themselves scandalously ; and according to the same Dr. Burnet, Sheldon the arch-bishop, (though a zealous champion for the rights and powers of the church) “ seemed not to have had a deep sense of religion, if any at all ; and spoke of it most commonly, as of an engine of government, and as matter of policy.” Even before the restoration, impious opinions and sallies of blasphemy were grown common amongst the cavaliers, who were wont, especially in their cups, to revile Almighty God for his partiality to the sectaries, and for deserting the king and the church. The account which the bishop gives of the vileness, the bitterness, the barbarity, the debauchery of the clergy after the restoration, is astonishing, and would be incredible, if the facts were not known to be true.

My Lord, you will not surely say that such an open dissolution of manners, and such latitudinarian principles were promoted in that reign, in order to raise a republican spirit. Far different was the design, even to introduce popery and slavery, when both the king and the high-churchmen were aiming too openly at power without control ; and nothing could possibly have kept alive a republican spirit (a spirit which had grown odious to the whole nation, by the late tyranny exercised under the name of the commonwealth,) I say nothing could possibly keep alive such a spirit, but the apparent ill designs and violent measures of the court and the clergy. Men who are oppressed, or who foresee inevitable oppression, will be naturally thinking of the

means of security and escape. But when they are well and equally protected, when the laws are inviolable, and property secure, no general or violent change is to be apprehended, especially where the title to the crown is uncontested. Nor do I remember that a commonwealth was ever thought of in England, or any dislike conceived against the government, or any subversion of the church intended, till some of our monarchs had rendered monarchy distasteful ; and the church, like the monarchy, when through the pride and fury of the bishops it was become terrible, became likewise odious.

It was this which first occasioned the notion and proposal of introducing a commonwealth, which yet never was settled, nor ever can be settled in England. Even the tyranny of king James, the second, (to say nothing farther of his brother's wild and unhalloved reign) as provoking and recent as it was, did not produce any effort for a commonwealth. I do not remember that the word was once mentioned in either house, upon their convention ; and if it was mentioned at all elsewhere, it was only in whispers, by two or three visionaries, who were not regarded, and had no party.

A commonwealth in England will never be other than a dream, existing only in crazy heads. All men of common sense know that we enjoy more liberty, more equal protection under our own legal monarchy, as 'tis administered by his majesty, than we could in any commonwealth existing, or that ever did exist. Neither did I ever find that there was, nor do I believe that there is, one reasonable man in his dominions, that thinks such a change either eligible or possible. This I speak in the sincerity, and from the conviction of my heart.

It is therefore highly blameable in any one, much more so in one of your Lordship's great station and credit, to raise public alarms, and to endeavour to infuse fears into his majesty's breast, of principles that no where appear, and of a party that, from my soul I think, do not exist. This is as unjust, as it would be to raise in his people a dread of his majesty ; nor can there be a greater crime than publishing terrors and tales, tending to break the confidence between king and people. Just such tendency had the old cry, about " the danger of the church ; " a popular alarm then calculated only to frighten prince and people, and big with mischief and falsehood. This false terror, and party word, your Lordship has finely exposed, in a sermon, of yours, when you were dean of Worcester. I am sorry to find your courage smaller now when your church emoluments are much larger.

Your Lordship knows, that that cry of the church's danger, was accompanied with another, equally bold and absurd, " the danger of a commonwealth." My Lord, you likewise know, who they were who raised and promoted those wild alarms, what violent effects they had, and what farther effects they were like to have had. Nor will you, I presume, say, that what evidently endangered the state and the Protestant succession then, will serve either now.

My Lord, where are these republicans ? For myself, I know none ; I protest solemnly to your Lordship, I know none ; none who are for a commonwealth, or any other change of government, except the Jacobites. Where too are those loose books, which tend to destroy all principles, and set men free from all governments ? Loose books are certainly punishable, and have been punished. For lewd and obscene

books, men have been imprisoned and pilloried. For books which have treated religion with indecency, men have been imprisoned and lined ; though some of the authors seemed crazy, and fitter for bedlam, than a gaol.

What other books your Lordship means, I cannot be sure. I can by no means suppose that you would thus revile books which you cannot answer ; books which profess to combat falsehood, imposture, and false reasoning ; books which assert the natural and legal rights of men, against such as would allow liberty to none but themselves, and claim as their right what neither God nor nature, nor law, ever gave them. Loose books, methinks, should be easily answered and refuted ; and so many thousand clergymen, with their superior piety and learning, be an over-match for all the loose writers in the world.

Loose books, I doubt, there ever will be in the world ; especially in free countries, where there is no way of preventing them, but by the utter extinction of liberty. Nor will even this prevent them, though it be a price too dear for silencing foolish and profane writers. In Italy and Spain, where none write but the clergy, or by their permission, there are many loose and profane books. Nor can there be looser or more pernicious, not to say blasphemous books upon the earth, than such as compliment the clergy with powers equal to those of the Deity ; make them gods upon earth, and assert their authority even to damn and to save ; to dispose of the other world, and consequently of this. I know not whether open systems of atheism were not less hurtful ; since it is less indignity to the Deity, to suppose him not to exist, than to suppose him the author of such fooleries and barbarities, as the clergy there impiously father upon him. Your Lordship knows what Plutarch says upon this subject ; it has been always applauded, never confuted.

My Lord, it cannot surprise your Lordship to be told, that the clergy, almost in all countries, have written more loose books than any other set of men upon earth ; that even in England they have done so. Let me quote you the authority of a reverend doctor for what I say, (nay from a speech of his to his brethren the clergy in convocation, even when they were censuring loose books.) “ With what face, Mr. Prolocutor,” says he, “ or with what conscience, can we offer to complain of the licentiousness taken by lay-writers, and yet connive at the like offences given by the ministers of our church ? I doubt, greater offences. For, if all the ill books against religion, scriptures, laws of this land, and constitution of this church, were here packed up together, I would undertake to pick out the worst of them, by pointing at those written by clergymen, even of the most profane drollery, as well as most serious heresy.”

Your Lordship cannot but know, how many loose and profane sermons have been preached and published upon this very solemnity, every year since it was instituted ; how many (too too many) of the preachers have made it a day of strife and animosity ; what falsehoods they have uttered ; what wicked principles they have advanced ; what impious comparisons they have made ; yet at the same time, with strange boldness, and indeed blindness, complained of loose and republican doctrines prevailing, to the great peril of church and state ; nay, still denounced judgments, and still railed at the freedom and licentiousness of the age.

Your Lordship is justly angry at libels. Can there be greater or more poisonous libels than such sermons as these, or worse libels against religion or government ? For they were generally levelled against the constitution, toleration, peace, and charity. Surely, your lordship, in calling for a remedy against the licentiousness of the age, could not fail to have principally in your eye the licentiousness of the pulpit, the most scandalous licentiousness of all, and to wish for a restraint upon preaching. Without such a restraint as this, you cannot consistently, nor with any degree of candor, call for one upon the press. Of all demagogues, preaching demagogues, spiritual demagogues, have been the most implacable and mischievous, as well as the most busy and barbarous of all incendiaries. What class of men has ever sounded the trumpet to sedition and blood, with such frequency and success, as they ?

My Lord, I shall say but little here upon the liberty of the press. The same ingenious and sensible hand, who has answered you already upon that head, is able to support his own reasoning. If it be a liberty, that is sometimes troublesome to the clergy, it brings a remedy along with it ; and none use it more freely than they ; and they of all men complain of it with the worst grace ; they who are so nobly encouraged, so amply endowed with learning, and revenue, and leisure, to defend truth, and assault error. Where they have reason and the gospel on their side, with so many subordinate advantages, what can stand before them ? What falsehood ? What error ? And where truth and reason are against them, and they against these, why should the same be left undefended ? When these are on their side they will defend themselves. What would they have more ?

Wherever liberty is unequal or restrained, so far truth will for ever be found impaired ; and with the suppressing of free enquiry and argument, truth will be suppressed. Hence 'tis quite lost, or at best disowned, in Italy and Spain, where the press is thoroughly restrained ; and according to the degrees of such restraint, will be the degrees of truth and error, of knowledge and ignorance every where.

The clergy surely will not say, that they distrust their cause. What then do they distrust ? What indeed can resist a good cause supported by good reasons ? Whoever attacks it, has but one bad weapon against two excellent ones ; namely, cavilling against right, and against argument defending right. God's cause therefore is hard to be opposed, and easily defended. Nor can it be at all opposed, where human follies and the interests of men come not to be by them blended by divine truths, and both called by the same names, declared to be inseparable, and contended for without distinction. Here indeed there will be abundant room for an attack, and even for a victory.

But simple and sincere truth can surely never be vanquished, where her champions are not disarmed, as they are in Popish and Mahometan countries : and therefore such who are conscious of being the champions of truth, must heartily despise the champions of error : and none but the champions of error can justly fear the champions of truth. I therefore wonder at your Lordship's fears. You have been engaged in controversy, and from that trial must have found the advantage of the liberty of the press, with the truth of what I say, how superiour an advocate for honest and open truth must be to one who quibbles, equiv-

ocates and frets, in support of by-ends. pride and hypocrisy. Probably too scoffers may say, that losers must have leave to complain, and that you are an enemy to the liberty of the press, because the liberty of the press proved no friend to you.

Besides, methinks it suits not well with a successor of the apostles, to be calling for helps which the apostles never sought. They had the tongues and pens of all men against them, and never desired the privilege of being alone heard, while others are obliged to be silent. Your Lordship is better situated than they: you live in a Christian country, and have a great revenue from your country to preach and write for religion, nay, have it though you be altogether idle. Are there loose books abroad, are there evil opinions stirring? Confute them, my Lord: such books and opinions can never resist the word of God and of reason. Your Lordship will not say that the world, the Christian world, is worse than it was in a state of Paganism. This would be to make an ill compliment to Christian teachers, maintained at so great an expense for so many hundred years.

For the government, my zeal is as great as your Lordship's can be, indeed too great to wish it the odium of restraining the press; an attempt very unpopular and unjust. The press was always most abused when shut up, neither has it ever been, nor can it ever be so abused when open, though the abuse from thence too, has been, and is very great. But no good which man enjoys, is exempt from abuse, not even religion nor government, nor health, nor power, nor liberty, nor property.

My Lord, I cannot desire to see a privilege in the hands of this government, which every government has abused as often as they had it. For, in short, there never was any such restraint but upon one side, who first thus disarmed the other, and then cudgelled them without mercy. We know when it was, that liberty and the Protestant religion were written and preached away, and by whom, with impunity, nay with applause and rewards; and when it was and by whom, that every answer, every defence was made penal, if not capital.

Your Lordship has another source of terrors, from the supposed growth of deism. Were there real ground for this, I do not think it politick in a bishop to own it, for fear of invidious questions. I have already said something of this matter: I shall here add something more.

I know not how it happens, but the clergy have almost always something to fear; deism, or heresy, or schism, or dissenters, or false brethren. This has sometimes served their purposes whenever they wanted new powers or penalties, or acts of vengeance, and when people were ignorant enough to grant them whatever they wanted; nor would they have had a pretence for desiring such powers, had they not pleaded terrible fears and alarms. But the old cry and artifice will not now do; for men are not so easily frightened or misled, nor so ready to adopt the selfish interests and passions of the clergy.

Does deism indeed increase? Why does not your Lordship, why do not the clergy confute it? What else have you been attending to, for so many ages? The cause of truth must for ever prevail, if its champions do not desert it, and pursue other designs. Your Lordship would not suggest, that truth wants another set of champions, less lazy and interested, more able and exemplary. To say the truth, some of

our present champions hardly deserve the name, yet still confidently assume and retain it. And 'tis really odd enough, to see an idle creature rolling in wealth, luxury, and ease, living voluptuously every day, preaching perhaps once a year (even then probably) not the gospel, but some favourite point of power or revenue; daily accumulating riches; changing almost yearly from diocese to diocese; still aiming at a better, and the highest of all; hardly visiting any, or staying long enough with any one flock to know them, scarce seeing them, much less feeding them, yet still calling them by that tender name, without blushing; to see him multiplying benefices and commendams; holding several great cures without attending upon one, yet declaiming, after and in the midst of all this, against the prevalence of deism and loose principles; and shamefully calling for worldly restraints against reasoning, for violence against opinions. Is it not exceeding natural, my Lord, for all men of discernment, nay, for all men who have eyes, to stand amazed at such wild inconsistency of his complaints, and his conduct?

I doubt it will be found hard to answer what Mr. Whiston has said in his *Memoirs of Dr. Clarke*, "It is clearly my opinion, says he, that till our defenders of Christianity do more than they have most of them hitherto done, as to affording the world this conviction, that they are really in earnest themselves; particularly till our bishops leave off procuring commendams, and heaping up riches and preferments on themselves, their relations, and favourites: nay till they correct their non-residence, till they leave the court, the Parliament, and their politics, and go down to their several dioceses, and there labour in the vineyard of Christ, instead of standing the most part of the day idle at the metropolis; they may write what learned vindications and pastoral letters they please, the observing unbelievers will not be satisfied they are in earnest, and, by consequence, will be little moved by all their arguments and exhortations." To this quotation I will add, that residence formerly was reckoned of indispensable, indeed of divine obligation, in the opinion of many able casuists. Cardinal Cajetan particularly thought it so, till great preferments and dignity gave him new lights.

Restraints upon opinion and conscience, have an evident tendency to increase hypocrisy and infidelity, instead of curing or preventing them; as is notorious in countries where the inquisition is established, that is to say, the highest of all restraints, imprisonment, confiscation, tortures, and burning alive. Even there, and in spite of all these ugly and inhuman horrors, deists, nay atheists, are more numerous than any where. And the reason is strong and obvious. For, (besides that the clergy there, and indeed in many other places beyond sea, are extremely profligate and scandalous, and utterly despised by all men, who are not quite bewitched with grimace and priestcraft) as people there dare not reason, or shew or propose any of their doubts, they acquire evil notions, and still retain the same, since it would be capital to own or explain them. Moreover, though the clergy are bad and licentious enough, even in some places where there is no inquisition, they are most scandalously so where they have one; and 'tis most true, that the ill lives of the clergy every where, their pride and hypocrisy, their rage and avarice, contribute too evidently to discredit religion, which

they thus disgrace, and seem not to believe. Hence all their reasonings for religion, especially where with such reasonings they mix selfish tenets of their own, are despised ; and some people may perhaps come to doubt the being of a God, because they who call themselves his ministers, live and act as if there were none ; nor can they think that men that are covetous or cruel, whatever sacred names they bear, are at all related to the God of mercy ; or that any good being, could employ bad ones in his service, and in so holy a cause.

The pious and learned Dr. Henry More, in his *Mystery of Godliness*, has a section to shew that the hypocrisy of professors fills the world with atheists. " Men," says he, " are exceedingly tempted to think the whole business of religion is at best but a plot to enrich the priests, and keep the people in awe, from their observing that they who make the greatest noise about religion, and are the most zealous therein, do neglect the laws of honesty, and common humanity. That they can easily invade other men's right ; that they can juggle, dissemble, and lye for advantage. That they are proud, conceited, love the applause of the people ; are envious, fierce, and implacable, unclean and sensual, merciless and cruel ; care not to have kingdoms flow in blood for maintaining their tyranny over the consciences of poor deluded souls."

Knows your Lordship any thing more whimsical, any thing more unmodest, than that when the public teachers are so singularly provided for, and possessed of all advantages, to defend a good cause ; yet these men called to this holy vocation, instead of making converts by pains, by persuasion, and by pious lives, should be continually calling upon the civil power to do by terror and force what they ought to do by godly exhortations, and a heavenly example ; to do what can never be done by any other means, much less by opposite means ? My Lord, intemperate ways are not the ways of Christ, nor intemperate words his words ; at least he never encouraged them in others.

But still I believe that this cry of deism is but an idle and ill-grounded cry and hope that our teachers have been, and still are too diligent and successful labourers in their master's vineyard, to suffer such a weed to grow up, at least to spread. My Lord, where are these deists ? What company does your Lordship keep, what books do you read ? I have hardly ever seen any book against Christianity ; and in books that attack priestcraft, Christianity is no ways concerned, and to attack authors who profess to be Christians, and only write against priestcraft, as what has corrupted Christianity, is itself downright priestcraft. 'Tis become a stale art to call such writers atheists or deists.

My Lord, I wish that all men were Christians, but am not for cutting off deists, who, like others that differ from us, are only to be dealt with by reason and persuasion. Nor can deism be ever terrible to the public, since deists are never likely to overspread and possess a nation. The bulk of mankind will always be rather overcredulous than incredulous ; and men of any sense will never be the worse neighbours or subjects for their speculations, though they pay no regard to the systems of churchmen. And if a man act agreeably to good sense, and the impulses of humanity, he is a good member of society ; nor need his fellow members look further, much less trouble or hurt him for differing from them, which is no more than what they do by him. But

a bigot is ever a ready instrument of mischief, a ready tool for the ambition or cruelty of his leaders, and apt to call good evil, and evil good. "Hot zealots," says father Paul, "believing every thing to be justifiable which is done with a view to religion, come thence to act against religion; nay, even against common humanity; and thus have set the world in a dreadful combustion."

In China, all men of consideration, all of any eminence for learning or dignity, are deists. I wish that in Spain and Italy, and in many other countries called Christian, as much civil felicity, and as many marks of prosperity were found, as in China: It were indeed better for mankind, that all fiery catholics and bigots every where, were converted into rational and sober Chinese. To be followers of Christ is the best choice, and the sure road to happiness: but to follow priests and bigots in most countries, and in most of their ways, is not to follow Christ, or happiness, or common sense.

My Lord, it is a great presumption, 'tis very uncandid, to charge men with opinions, which they do not own; it is worse to charge them with opinions which they utterly disown. It is unjust to charge them with one obnoxious opinion in consequence of another, nay, to take both for granted; to suppose a man is a deist, and therefore a republican; or a republican, and therefore a deist. Does it become a good Christian, or a fair reasoner, or a well bred man, to assert or insinuate such things? Is it not a wicked thing, to prejudice his majesty against any part of his good subjects? to bring a false, at best precarious accusation against them? to represent them to him as republicans, and to bigots as infidels? Why republicans, when they have as much liberty and protection as ever any government could bestow, as much as any subject could desire or enjoy? Do they confess any such principles or spirit? Why deists? Do they own themselves so? Or why should deism spread? No body is paid to maintain deism; nor does any interest attend it, but obloquy and unpopularity. Sure, they must be miserably weak for whom deism is too strong.

'Tis an old artifice, one much beneath your Lordship, or any man of probity and honour, an artifice only worthy of miserable bigots and little sour priests, thus to represent men as enemies to God and the king, because they presume to differ in opinion with some of the clergy.

Thus almost all the learned men at the reformation were reckoned heretics, if not atheists, because they were no great admirers of the monk, or perhaps for reforming the clergy: thus the first Christians were by the Pagan priests and persecutors traduced, as enemies to the gods, and to Cæsar; and thus all the dissenters in this nation were continually branded by the parsons, as certain enemies to monarchy, and therefore unworthy of toleration, or even of protection; and that imputation continued confidently, till it was no longer believed; and long experience has quite confuted the parsons. We are again alarmed with the old cry, or a new one just like the old, and from the same quarter, and for the same ends. There are hosts of republicans and deists, God knows where, like the army which lay Incognito at Knightsbridge.

It is an easy matter to raise phantoms, and to frighten the crowd, generally infatuated with superstition and false zeal; nay, a good de-

gree of confidence, and strong assertion, will often mislead men of sense ; the most groundless invention often finds many vouchers, and sometimes gains such credit and belief, that it is unsafe to deny it, much more to expose it : instances of this are endless.

Your Lordship cannot forget what an uproar was raised some years ago about a *Hell-fire club*, said to be subsisting in London ; how much it alarmed the clergy, how much the clergy alarmed others, and how zealously they called (as usual) for the aid of the secular arm ; what a solemn proclamation ensued, full of pathetic strains, and of all due horror against such an impious society ; how the Lord chancellor was directed by the king, the justices of peace by the Lord chancellor, to find out these dark assemblies, and bring them to punishment ; how generally this terrible story was believed, how much it filled conversation, and employed the pulpit and the press ; how gentlemen of name and fortune, nay, ladies of eminent quality, were confidently charged with being members of this horrible club. Never was a finer topic for haranguing, for spreading hatred and terror, abuse and calumny. It was become fashionable, nay, orthodox to believe it ; 'twas infidelity to doubt it, and they were atheists who denied it. Now where did all this mighty tumult, these pannic terrors, and this solemn enquiry end ? Even in the discovery, that there was no such discovery to be made. Yet I never heard that the vile broachers of such a wicked alarm, that the wicked authors or promoters of so much calumny, ever took shame to themselves. No : some sort of men never own themselves in the wrong, even when they are convicted of having done it. It would be a digression to mention here, what a knavish purpose this pious and popular cry was intended to answer.

As of all truths, the truths of religion are the most valuable ; so of all falsehoods, religious falsehoods are the most mischievous : because with the misled vulgar they are made to pass for religious truths. What destructive effects they have had, what seditions they have produced, what wars, what persecutions and massacres, would require a volume to specify and explain.

My Lord, I beg pardon for detaining you so long. I hope it will not offend your Lordship, that I have spoken my mind thus freely concerning your late performance, which is itself a very free one. I hope I have treated you with civility ; without passion or anger, or any personal prejudice. I am sure I have. I honour your abilities, and your high station in the church, and I am,

With great respect,

My Lord, &c.

*mon preached before the Learned Society of Lincoln's Inn, on
 Nov. 30, 1732, from Job xxxiv. 30. That the Hypocrite reign not,
 the People be ensnared. By a Layman.*

*i potest, quod fit in multis quæstionibus, ut res verborum illa sit, hæc
 CIC.*

the thirty-fourth chapter of the book of Job, and the thirtieth
 it is thus written :——*That the hypocrite reign not, lest the
 be ensnared.*

DEAR BRETHREN, AND COUNTRYMEN,

I present myself before you, on this occasion with the greater alac-
 rity and assurance, for that I am conscious of no engagement to any
 party or opinion repugnant to truth, and the general interest of my
 country : I am under no pay or influence to support ancient prejudices
 or false reasonings ; under no bias to flatter particular fraternities and
 sects, nor awed by the fear of offending them. For the rule and
 guide of my politicks, I have the constitution and history of England ;
 and in my religion, I am governed by the Bible and common sense.
 He who walks by these rules walks securely ; and he who follows the
 airy notions, sophistical distinctions, and bare averments of men,
 is to be deceived, at least can never know that he is not.

That the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.

The task which from these words I propose to myself, is to defend
 the right of every man to private judgment and opinion, to shew the
 folly and wickedness of setting up authority against conscience,
 to manifest the pernicious tendency and effects of power and im-
 mense wealth in the clergy. As I go along, I shall apply my rea-
 soning to the purpose of the day ; and, at the conclusion add a word
 concerning the unhappy prince, whose blood was shed on this day ;
 and the proper use to be made of it.

Common sense is our first and last guide, since by that we are to judge
 of all other guides ; and there is more sound than meaning in the ob-
 jection which some make to the guidance of reason, when they ask,
 "whether we are to judge of that by which we are to be judged,"
 or, the holy Scriptures, since we must recur to reason to know
 whether the Scriptures be holy, and whether we are to be judged
 by them. 'Tis to little purpose to tell us, that "for this we must
 receive the word and authority of holy men." For, we must still consult
 reason, whether these be holy men or no, and whether we ought to
 receive them or no ; seeing there are many sets of men all pretending
 to be holy, all claiming this authority to themselves only, and all de-
 voting it to every other set.

Reason must therefore determine, which of all these are the
 truly holy, and whether any of them be more so than ourselves. If
 signs of holiness and of knowledge be as obvious to us as to them,
 we have as much of either as they have ; and in truth, the sources
 of knowledge are as open to us as to them. Besides, it ought to mortify their
 pride and be a lesson of humility to them, as it is surely one of cau-

lion to us, to see that they never agree with one another ; that even those of the same society, professing the same faith, subscribing the same articles, and professing to believe the same scriptures, agree not in the rules and explanations which they exhibit to us. Great is their variance, not only about ceremonies, circumstantialia and discipline, but even about essentials, about principles to be believed, about duties to be practised, and even about the nature, operations and attributes of the Deity : nay, equally great and signal, is their want of mutual charity, as is their want of mutual concord. Are these to be our guides, who thus pull us various and opposite ways ? Can they teach mutual love and forbearance, who hate and revile each other ? And is it not notable want of modesty in them, who cannot agree with one another, to expect that we should agree with them all, or with any of them, when we approve not, or comprehend not what they say, or when what they say, is evidently for their interest and against ours, as all their aims at power and wealth evidently are ?

This reasoning, if it be true, as I think it is, will serve to condemn arch-bishop Laud and his associates, who exacted a blind obedience to their own tenets and schemes, a rigid conformity to all their ceremonies, inventions and innovations, and cruelly persecuted all who preferred conscience to complaisance, and were better Christians than churchmen and courtiers.

Surely it ought to check and cool the fierceness of religionists of all sorts towards each other about difference in opinion, to behold how flaming and rigorous every man is in behalf of his own ; to behold the most ridiculous and pernicious opinions defended with equal obstinacy and bitterness. The Jews, the Papists, the Mahometan, the Banian, have all equal satisfaction in their own several systems, have all equal detestation for one another, and for every different sect.

Is not this a pregnant proof, that all this furious zeal, is false, zeal that it is all miserable bigotry and prejudice, or constitutional intemperance of spirit ? A zealous Jew, had he been bred a Papist, would have been equally zealous for Popery, and perhaps for burning those very Jews who are now his brethren. Had the late Dr. Sacheverel been educated in the Scottish Kirk, he would doubtless have breathed as fierce persecution against prelacy, as he has done for it ; and treated it with as foul and uncomely names, as he treated dissenters and false brethren.

The same is true of arch-bishop Laud, and of other hasty and passionate zealots ; provided always, that all other preferments in another way be taken away ; else the batteries of their zeal are often quickly changed, and turned against the party for whom they were first erected. Witness Parker bishop of Oxford, and Ward bishop of Sarum, once both holy, praying, and rigid Presbyterians, afterwards both rigid persecutors of Presbyterians. Is it not probable that they would have died Presbyterians, had the church preferments been out of their reach ?

This consideration therefore, that every man is fond of his own opinions, and not the less fond for their being very foolish and extravagant, ought to keep men from quarrelling about any opinions, and to look upon those who promote such quarrels, as monsters and their worst enemies. This enmity about notions, chimeras, ceremonies, and other

idle disputes ; this war about words, and creeds, and articles, a war and dispute which have produced such mighty bloodshed and desolation in the world, has been the sole work and contrivance of ambitious clergymen ; who, for ends of their own, and the gratification of their pride and fury, and other evil passions, had the art and cruelty to make the laity thus to persecute and butcher one another. What infamous inhumanity was this in clergymen ? What frenzy and insatiation in the laity ? But such are ever the effects of implicit belief, which is naturally followed by implicit obedience, which is the certain beginning, as well as the certain consequence of slavery. All this evil, uncharitableness and barbarity, arose from the wicked and impossible attempt to force or suppress private judgment and conscience. Of such mighty consequence it is, " that the hypocrite reign not ;" since wherever he does, " the people will" surely " be ensnared."

What added to this evil and insolence, this hellish cruelty upon the score of opinion, and made it still more provoking and intolerable, was, that it was all perpetrated in the name of Christ, of the meek Jesus, and said to be for his church and cause : a declaration so impudent and incredible, that it could only be made by men who were void of shame, to men who wanted eyes. It was as false as the gospel was true ; nor could a revelation which inspired or warranted any degree of bitterness or cruelty, ever have come from God, or from any but the antagonists of God, and enemy of man, from hypocrites reigning, that is, tyrannizing in the name of the Lord.

Yet so these hardened deluders argued, trusting to the power of delusion ; especially when to that power of delusion they had added a good share of secular power. And before they could make the laity such blind tools, as to be the tormentors and executioners of one another, they had eradicated every grain and principle of Christianity out of their hearts, yet made them believe themselves the only true Christians.

This was the use which such clergymen made of the boundless trust and power given them by the laity ; and over the laity they exercised it without bounds or mercy. Such was the power of Laud and the clergy of his time, and such the unhalloved and inhuman use which they made of it ; yet that use was the common and natural use, the power itself being unnatural. Indeed, worldly power and opulence in such as preach the gospel, are so repugnant to the spirit and precepts of the gospel, that it is no wonder they cannot thrive, or indeed subsist together ; but the gospel must either destroy them, or they the gospel. It is too visible on which side the victory has chiefly turned. Whatever fills men with pride and hatred, and prompts them to severity and revenge, may be Popery or Mahometanism, but is just as contrary to Christianity, as Christianity is to all pride and hatred, to all rigour and vengeance.

From hence it is plain who they are, what set of men, that have hurt and abused, perverted and abolished Christianity most. I am sorry to say it, but it is too true, that in many countries, and at many times, the church and religion have been very distinct and opposite things : sure I am, that I have seen very good churchmen who were very bad Christians, and some who were no Christians at all. I will not say that Laud was no Christian ; but I may boldly affirm, that he

resembled not the first Christians, nor professed a Christian temper : an extreme good churchman I readily own him.

'That it is not religion or Christianity, but chiefly, if not only, passion and prejudice, which determine men to a fondness for their own set of notions, and for their own community, appears from hence, that if a vicious man be on their side, especially if he profess much zeal for his party, they cherish and extol him ; whilst upon a very unblameable and pious man, who is not of their party, they are apt to bestow very ill language, and often ill usage. 'This is not the spirit of true religion, but of passion and partiality : yet this spirit too many derive from their particular religion, which they think the best, but which surely is very bad ; and 'twere better they had none, than one which banishes their reason and humanity. Now if such a spirit should ever happen to possess those who profess to be our guides, we may judge how wise and safe it would be to trust to their guidance, or even to own them as guides. Had there been no such guides about an hundred years ago, we should not in all likelihood have had this day now to solemnize. The strange doctrines and bitter oppressions in those days, naturally produced such a day as this day.

'Tis not religion, at least not the Christian religion, that heats and animates such men ; 'tis only faction, a complication of evil and unhallowed passions. Whoever loves or hates, blesses or curses, from anger or fondness, from obligation or resentment, belies religion, if he pretend under its holy name to hide base ends, and a worldly and partial heart. 'Tis by such selfish and unworthy ways that the church and religion have sometimes come to signify contradictory things : 'tis thus that men who have had no religion or virtue, have been extolled as excellent churchmen : 'tis thus that men of the highest religion and virtue, have been, and often are reviled and condemned as bad churchmen ; and 'tis thus that pious Christians have been punished, sometimes burned, by such as were special churchmen, but not Christians. And indeed, whenever such false zealots manifest such a spirit of impatience, of rage and reviling, they cannot give a clearer proof that such spirit is not of Christ, since 'tis so opposite to his spirit. Nor can men, who shew themselves full of bitterness, and want charity, be at all commissioned by him, who was all meekness, and gave to his disciples a new commandment, that they should love one another, and even love their enemies. Yet who so sudden to wax wroth as many of his pretended successors ? Who more forward and unmanly in calling unseemly names ; a practice, as common with many of them, as with the meanest men, and even the lowest sort of women ? Heretic, atheist, infidel, are amongst such churchmen words of reproach, equivalent to the foul language which the vulgar throw at one another, and equally shocking to well-bred men and true Christians.

Surely, from men who come from God, and are vicegerents to his Son, one would naturally expect a god-like behaviour, with an uncommon store of Christian meekness and benevolence. How does rage, how do gross names of abuse, how does uncharitableness, revenge, avarice, ambition, and the most savage passions and demeanour, suit with a commission from heaven, and the gift of the Holy Ghost ?

I proceed now to discourse more directly upon the undue wealth and power of the clergy, and the great evils attending the same ; from

whence will appear the calamities and certain thralldom attending the reign of hypocrites.

The clergy, whenever they were left to take as much power and wealth as they pleased, rarely thought the whole too much ; nor do I remember any instance wherever they owned that they had enough. Thus they have engrossed some countries whole ; of others the greatest and best parts ; and as much as they could of all. Where they have the soil, they have the power in course ; and where they have both, (that is to say, in Popish countries) they are the most unmerciful of all landlords, and the most oppressive of all magistrates. Look over the fine continent of Italy, and other climes where priests riot and tyrannize ; you will find the laity there and every where starving, when the clergy are the land owners.

Ought not the laity in other countries to take warning by this ? And is it not monstrous and unnatural for any number of laymen to concur with the clergy in their exorbitant claims ? Should not the laity too learn by the example of the clergy, to take care of themselves ; what wealth the clergy have, they have from the laity : by the power that they seek or assume, they would bind and govern the laity. Is it natural, or just, or wise in the laity, to impoverish themselves, in order to enrich the clergy ? to forge their own chains, to exalt their own creatures and pensioners into tyrants and taskmasters, or to suffer them so to exalt themselves ? Can they forget the insolence and tyranny of arch-bishop Laud, the terrible height of power which he had usurped, with his aspiring views to raise the clergy above the laity and the law ? Can they forget his saucy declaration, that “ he hoped to see the time when ne’er a Jack Gentlemen in England, should dare to be covered before the meanest priest ?” And as an indication how much many of the clergy thought, and wished, and designed as he did, they of this stamp have been ever since adoring and extolling this usurping arch-priest, this prosecutor and oppressor, this instrument and prompter of oppression.

The man who contends for power and riches to the priests, is ever popular with the high priesthood, ever their darling ; nor are they always over anxious about the soundness of either his faith or morals. Is not this too a rule and example to the laity ? And ought not the laity to prize and protect, and encourage any layman who asserts the rights and privileges of his brethren the laity ? Is it not equally fair and grateful, and honourable, to cherish and esteem any clergyman, or number of clergymen, who are candid enough to maintain the interest and independency of the laity ? Is it not foolish, ungrateful, dishonest, and even barbarous, to revile, or evil-intreat such clergymen ; to abuse and weaken these our friends, and to join with our enemies, with such as would enthrall us, and bring us under their blind guidance ? Where the clergy are opulent, do not the people starve ? Where the clergy have power, are not the people slaves ? Is it not thus in Spain, thus in Italy ? In these countries, where they are proprietors of all things, and govern all men, can they be even said to be teachers, or even to be Christians ? No ; their teaching is deceiving, their doctrines are lies and impieties, and their lives anti-christian. Christianity and truth would undo them. They have therefore banished Christianity, and erected the priesthood ; and for Christ and truth, they

preach themselves and fables. "Every one, from the least even unto the greatest, is given to covetousness; from the prophet even to the priest, every one dealeth falsely." Jer viii. 10.

This is the effect of power and wealth in churchmen; two things which have proved such a certain and heavy curse upon religion and the world, as if the holy author of both meant thence to convince mankind, how pernicious, how destructive they every where are to his church and people, and to warn all men and nations against suffering or encouraging them.

Great power and revenues in churchmen have not only produced and multiplied every mischief formerly known in the world, but also produced mischiefs so new and terrible, as the world, even the Pagan world never knew before; such as persecution and butchery for conscience and opinion, wars and national massacres for religion, with that mighty compendium of all that is horrid, treacherous, and cruel upon earth, the execrable tribunal of the inquisition. What had Paganism so shocking and horrible, as to be compared to this? Not even their human sacrifices, which were few in comparison, occasional, and stated. The inquisition is a continual human slaughter-house; and in it men, myriads of men, have been immolated after tedious macerations in dark and frightful dungeons, after unrelenting racks and tortures, with every species of treachery, misery and terror; and all for the best thing which they could do, for their sincerity and piety in worshipping the Deity in the way which they were persuaded he liked best.

Now as the inquisition is nothing but the highest improvement of persecution, which begins with tests and negative penalties, but ends in fires and halters; I will enumerate a few of the many causes for which men are committed to it; and they are such and so various, that no man who in the least exercises his own faculties, or practices common charity and mercy, or even has common commerce with the world, can avoid it.—If he has heard a heretic preach or pray; (that is, if he has thus heard the best and wisest man upon earth, who differs from the extravagancies of churchmen:) if when he is summoned he appear not: if being excommunicate, he sue not for absolution: if a heretic (for example, a Mr. Locke, or a Sir Isaac Newton) be his friend: if he do any act of kindness for a heretic; visit him, treat him, assist him, or shew him pity, or give him counsel: if he suspect the truth of their lying legends and forged miracles; if he asserts the indifference of meats or of days, or interpret Scripture according to his own and to common sense: if he conceal any heresy, his own or other people's; if he spare father or mother, wife or child;—he is for these, or any of these causes, and for a thousand others, liable to the unparralleled cruelties of the inquisition. Let me add, that by heresy is meant every conscientious, honest, rational, and benevolent opinion differing from the senseless, narrow, barbarous whims and grimaces of the priests.

As a proof, what quick havock such a tribunal must make in a country, cardinal Turquemeda, the first inquisitor general in Spain, even in the infancy of the inquisition, brought an hundred thousand souls into it in the small space of fourteen years: of these, six thousand were burnt alive. Observe too, that when such persons are seized, all that

they have is also seized, and their families left to starve, or sent thither too, if they shew pity, or attempt assistance.

Can the merciful and wise God, can the meek and compassionate Jesus, who laid down his life for men, have any thing to do with such a church, or with such bellish instruments and butchers, impudently calling themselves *holy*, and their scene of butchery the *holy office*? Wisely did our first reformers disown her being a church: Laud afterwards, and his followers, laboured to restore her credit, contended for her being a true church, and even derived themselves from her; nay, strove to shew themselves worthy of the kindred and descent, by assuming her pride and cruelties: witness their numerous imprisonments, excessive fines, whippings, dismembrings, and other barbarities; to their own infamy, and to the dishonour of Protestants, and of our nation.

Equal to its other horrors, is the black treachery practised by that detestable court, and by all who belong to, or assist it. In order to ensnare a man into the inquisition, they will travel countries, and cross the seas, to become acquainted with him; will court, caress, and flatter him, treat him, make him presents, lend him money, administer to his pleasures, seem to love and adopt his opinions; rail at the church, curse his persecutors, and the inquisition, and swear him an eternal friendship.——All with a black and murderous purpose to seize him in a proper place, and carry him off to the fires and racks of that infernal tribunal. But where the interest of the church is concerned, villany changes its nature, and becomes meritorious; and the blackest perfidy, and even perjury, is esteemed and practised as good policy. Thus the Pope's legate, at the head of a crusade against the Albigenes, entrapped their protector and general, the Count de Beziers, solemnly swore not to hurt him, and then seized and imprisoned him.

Let me just add upon this head, That blasphemy, or any outrageous words and defiance offered to Almighty God, is not punishable, nor cognisable in the inquisition. The great crime and pursuit there, is heresy; that is to say, blasphemy against the trade and opinion of priests. So that any profane wretch may blaspheme God without fear of the inquisitors, provided he blaspheme like a good churchman, and say nothing against the priests, or their gear: but if heresy be mixed with his blasphemy, he cannot hope to escape. Most remarkable too and shocking is the impudence and hypocrisy of these inquisitors, when after having long starved in their horrid dungeons the wretched offender; after having long terrified, misused and tortured him, they at last deliver him over to the secular arm: they have then the solemn assurance, to beseech the civil magistrate, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, not to hurt his life or limb; yet would excommunicate the civil magistrate, if he did not burn him alive.——Such is the terrible power and falsehood of hypocrites reigning.

I am far from thinking that what I have said about the inquisition is a digression. That terrible part of Popery, or indeed any other part of Popery, which is all terrible, is too little known in England. For some time after the reformation, a due horror was kept up amongst the people by our preachers against the church of Rome: and it was done like Protestants, and is their duty at all times; and they who omit it, are unworthy of the name, and I doubt have dark and unprotestant de-

signs. But when our clergy began to contend for equal dominion and wealth, they found that they could not consistently rail at the church of Rome, and yet follow her example. And so far altered was their stile at last, that instead of painting and reviling her, as an old withered harlot, the mother of abominations and whoredoms, and drunk with the blood of the saints, it became fashionable to defend her, nay, to praise her, and even to punish such as exposed her : such uncommon friends she found in Laud, and his adherents. It is true, he and some others of that cast wrote books against some parts of Popery. But what signifies writing against Papists, when he was introducing and practising Popery at home ? For all cruelty, or even severity for opinion, and all authority assumed over conscience and the soul, is Popery, by whatever name it be called. Besides, it was natural for Laud, who was acting as Pope himself, to deny the power of the other Pope, at least here ; and for the bare notions, the ceremonies, the grimaces, and mummary of Popery, they are of little consequence, any farther than as they tend to introduce and preserve its power, by creating or continuing delusion in the people.

Laud and his adherents were notorious persecutors ; and all persecution is Popery ; and every degree of it, even the smallest degree, is an advance towards the inquisition. As negative penalties are the first degree, so death and burning is the last and highest ; all the other steps are but natural gradations following the first degree, and introducing the last. For the smallest implies the necessity of a greater, where the former fails ; and consequently of the greatest of all, which is the inquisition.

Was it at all wonderful, that Laud and his associates were charged with being Papists, when they were openly introducing and exerting all the terrible parts of Popery, church power, and persecution, and thus establishing church tyranny and an inquisition ? For it was thus that that bloody court was established ; and the like claims and practices will always introduce and establish it. Madam de Motteville, in the memoirs of Anna of Austria, says expressly, upon the authority and information of king Charles the First's Queen, that " Laud was a good Catholic in his heart." It is certain that he brought in what was most terrible in Popery, its power and cruelty, with not a few of its fooleries and superstitions. Whoever is a tyrant and persecutor, is a Papist, in the only sense of the word that Protestants and freemen are concerned about.

Let such as claim power to control conscience and opinion, consider this, if they have not considered it already. Let those too, over whom such power is claimed, consider it ; and look upon the men who claim it, as enemies and deceivers, that would seduce them in order to enslave them. How would any man, any Protestant, (who dares own his opinion) like the inquisition ? Without doubt he would abhor it. Let him likewise abhor the ways and practices that lead to it ; for it is supported entirely by the power of the clergy, which never has, never can produce any good. As dominion over thoughts and notions is in itself a monster, the greatest of all monsters ; it must be supported by monstrous means, even by priests wielding or directing the civil sword ; the pretended followers of the humble Jesus, treading upon the necks of nations, engrossing their wealth, and spilling their blood.

Is any man fond of his liberty, as all men naturally are, and of his own opinions, (for this too is natural) and of examining all opinions ; which every man has a right to do ? Would he worship God after his own way, be subject to no man's insolent rebukes and control, be exempt from vexatious suits and prosecutions, from clerical curses followed with civil punishments, with dungeons, and (as they say) with damnation ? Would he preserve his conscience, his person, his time, and his property, and all that is dear to him, safe and intire ? He is, in consequence of all this, obliged for ever to oppose all power in the clergy, as it has been ever found utterly repugnant to whatever is dear to men and societies. I know not that ever they possessed power without using it perniciously ; I know not that ever they could persecute, and did not persecute. Such of them as had most argued and inveighed against persecution, when they were under it, exercised it afterwards without shame or remorse, whenever they got the rod into their own hands. Thus the Catholics acted against the Arians ; thus the latter acted against the former ; both complaining heavily of persecution, both heavy persecutors.

St. Athanasius could at one time argue, " That the devil does therefore use violence, because he has a bad cause, and the truth is not on his side. Jesus Christ, on the contrary, uses only exhortations, because his cause is good : ' If any man will be my disciple, let him follow me.' He forces no man to follow him ; nor enters by force where he is shut out." Whence that father observes, " That this persecuting sect could not be of God" So argued all the orthodox upon that occasion, and I think very truly. St. Hilary urges the same argument to an Arian emperor and persecutor, and denies the Arians to be the true church, for this very reason. But the orthodox, when they were uppermost, changed their tone ; and never were there more merciless persecutors, oppressors and butchers, than they. Hence their own reasoning has been frequently turned upon them ; and the heretics have charged them in their turn, as being none of Christ's flock, because they had renounced his spirit, and exercised force and cruelty. The Donatists particularly insulted them upon this unchristian inconsistency.

But so it hath eternally happened, that no reasoning, not even their own reasoning, could ever restrain churchmen, orthodox or heterodox, when they were invested with power, or with the direction of power, from using it violently. The Presbyterians justly exclaimed against the violence and tyranny of arch-bishop Laud and his brethren, for harassing, imprisoning, fining, and persecuting them, and even driving them from their native homes, to seek peace, and shelter, and the quiet worship of God in the woods of America. He had converted the High Commission Court into an inquisition. Nay, every bishop's court was become an inquisition ; and many of the best churchmen were silenced, fined, and even deprived, for adhering honestly to the doctrines of the reformation, to primitive strictness of manners, and for observing the Sabbath.

Did the Presbyterians afterwards, these very Presbyterians, who had thus groaned and smarted under persecution, and complained of its injustice and fury, exercise charity and forbearance towards others who dissented from them, when they were become masters of ecclesiastical rule ? No. Never was a more bitter, intolerating race, or more rigor-

ous exactors of conformity. Every man who differed from them, was an enemy to the state, an innovator, forsooth, whom it behoved the state to suppress. They had forgot that Laud had brought the same charge against them but a little before, and how unmercifully they had been then used as public incendiaries, enemies, and innovators. Nor do any set of priests fail to draw down, if they can, the anger of the crown upon any man who has merited theirs. Thus the monks of St. Denis in France, in the twelfth century, accused the famous Abelard, then amongst them, with being an enemy to the glory and crown of France, only for denying that their founder was Dionysius the Areopagite mentioned in the New Testament. It is indeed a charge which all domineering priests in the world have ever brought, will ever bring against all who offend them, against all who withdraw from their power, and disown their systems. The Presbyterians, when undermost, felt this to be true, both before and afterwards; and always, when they felt it, exclaimed against it; but took it up themselves without blushing, as soon as ever they tasted of dominion.

The churchmen too, they who had persecuted the Presbyterians without all mercy, the moment they found themselves persecuted by parliaments, made heavy outcries against persecution, and preached and wrote for toleration. It was then that Dr. Taylor published his book entitled, *The Liberty of Prophesying*: an excellent book it is, and was then extremely applauded by his brethren of the Episcopal profession. But did these churchmen, did even Dr. Taylor, after the restoration, observe their own reasoning and writings for indulgence to dissenters? No, it was the great business of the churchmen, when they had resumed their old seats and revenues, to preach, to write, to solicit severe laws, and then the execution of these laws against their Protestant brethren, during all that long reign.

Was not all this strangely inconsistent, as well as strangely unchristian, on both sides? And was it not strange madness, as well as wickedness, in the civil power, to gratify the sour and aspiring spirit of the ecclesiastics, by plaguing and punishing the people about religion? Their is no end of their demands, nor of the unreasonableness of such demands. In Spain, where they profess to burn heretics, that is to say, Protestants, they complain of it at the same time, as persecution in a Protestant country, to imprison a Romish priest, however factious and busy he be in perverting of Protestants. The high clergy in England, though avowed enemies to a toleration here, would think it terrible persecution to deny it to themselves, or their brethren in Scotland. Ay, but we of the church of England are the true church of Christ, says the English Episcopalian. And so says Rome of herself, so says Scotland, so says Geneva and Greece, and so say all the churches in the world; and each of them would persecute and abolish all the rest as false or defective.

This is not the spirit of religion, nor of its author, but an open departure from that spirit. It is the spirit of faction and fury, which utterly blinds men, and extinguishes that of peace and charity, without which men cannot be followers of Christ. Did we not daily see it, it would be incredible, to what extravagancies religious disputes will carry men. Daniel Tilenus, a learned man, and public professor (I think of divinity,) became so heated in favour of Arminianism, in

opposition to Calvinism and predestination, that he declared, were he obliged to change his religion, he would turn Turk sooner than Calvinist ; for he denied that the Calvinists believed in God, and owned that the Turks did. Grotius, when ambassador for Sweden in France, had two chaplains, a Calvinist and a Lutheran, who preached by turns. What they principally laboured was to revile one another, and their sermons were only invectives. The ambassador, tired and ashamed of the extravagances of these reverend madmen, begged them to explain the gospel without wounding Christian charity. This good advice neither of them relished. His Lutheran chaplain particularly replied, that he must preach what God inspired ; and went on in the old strain. For, all the ravings of hot-headed divines are fathered upon God. Grotius at last ordered him either to forbear railing or preaching. The meek preacher turned away in great wrath, expressing his amazement, that “ a Christian ambassador should shut the mouth of the Holy Ghost.” This he thought terrible usage, and persecution, and published his complaints every where, that “ Grotius had shut the mouth of the Holy Ghost ;” that is, his chaplain’s mouth.

I return to consider the consequences of power and great wealth in the clergy. These acquirements of opulence and dominion were so foreign to the first preaching of the gospel, so little known to its author and disciples, that ’tis no wonder they assorted so ill with it, and at last so strangely transformed it, and even banished all but the name. What can be seen of Christ and his humility, of the apostles and their poverty, in the pomp and pride, in the fierceness and domination of priests ? Is ought of the plainness and simplicity of the gospel to be found in the intricacies of school divinity, in the endless wranglings and wonderful distinctions of ecclesiastics ? Does the Pope, or such as resemble, or would resemble the Pope, bear any likeness of Christ, or of St Peter ? Did the ambition of the bishops and clergy, their avidity for power and rich churches, for which they contended with blows, and bloodshed, and slaughter, come from Christ, or from the genius of his religion ? Were the seditions, tumults and wars, which ensued such ambitious pursuits, the effects of a Christian, or of a clerical spirit ? Yet were not such evils and terrible calamities immediately derived from the thirst of the clergy after grandeur and authority ?

At first they had no revenue but alms, and of these alms they had only a share ; but to that share they at last added (I had almost said feloniously) the whole, cheating the donors, and robbing the poor. They afterwards greatly enlarged these revenues (which were at first chiefly usurped) by arts and contrivances sufficiently wicked and vile, even by deceiving silly women and bigots, and selling them salvation for present money and rents ; by terrifying the weak and dying, and forcing them to compound for heaven, by parting with all that they possessed on earth. Father Paul, that rational and honest clergyman, says, that the church is beholden, for her greatest legacies and donations, to the bounty of infamous women, strumpets and prostitutes ; or to that of peevish people, who thus gratified their spite towards their own blood and relations. And as the church had no riches, but what were freely given her, or taken and gotten unjustly by her ; so she had no power, but what was either begged or usurped. What use they have made

of both, we have already seen. It is most natural, that what is ill gotten, should be ill used.

It would make a curious history, to discover and explain minutely, from what particular men, and by what particular arts and application, every farm, every estate and donation now possessed by churchmen, was at first acquired. I question whether any revenues in the world were ever so wickedly procured; since, to enrich the church, all means, even wickedness, murder, and impiety, were deemed lawful. Thus assassins and blasphemers merited protection and absolution; tyranny and oppression were warranted and sanctified; holy snares were laid, false terrors spread, miracles forged, God's name belied, and Jesus and his blessed mother profanely personated by priests, to delude enthusiasts; as if these heavenly beings had thus honoured them with a visit in person.

It were endless to enumerate all the arts and impieties, impostures and lies, by which churchmen formerly filled their coffers, at the expense and through the stupidity of laymen. And though no possessions were ever so impiously obtained, I never heard any instance of their parting with them from remorse or shame, even whilst the right heirs, thus deprived of their estates, were starving, and the possessors (or rather usurpers) gorged with more wealth than they could use even in their luxury and debauches. Whatever was once annexed to the church, in these days of usurpation and darkness, (however knavishly or violently obtained) was forthwith sacred and unalienable: nay, it became no less than sacrilege, to divest her of what she had gained by robbery and fraud. For, whatever was once hers, even her frauds and crimes, were holy; and it was profane to censure them, or indeed to see them; and he was profane, nay atheistical, who did it. Whoever found fault with the church, was an enemy to the church; and he who was an enemy to the church, was an atheist. Hence the frequent and ridiculous application of atheism and blasphemy, till these two words, of themselves very awful, grew contemptible. As to the quantity of the church's wealth, she never knew any stint or bounds; but whilst the laity had to give, she took, till in some countries she had all, and they rags, and no bread.

Even in this Protestant nation it is computed, that they have a fifth part of our wealth; yes, that fifteen or twenty thousand priests are endowed with the fifth part of the property of eight millions of people. Are they satisfied with this? And do they never aim at more, or complain of this as too little? If they do, 'tis not for the reputation of their modesty: I am sorry to add, that they are in a way of draining and monopolizing all the wealth of England. It is thought, that the revenue of the churchmen is at present as large as in the times of Popery, notwithstanding the demolition of so many monasteries, and the seizure of their revenues; considering that the clergy then maintained the poor, who are now supported chiefly by the laity, at an immense charge, no less than two millions a year. There are indeed some individuals, who have very small salaries: but whose fault is that? Are there not others, who wallow in thousands, yet do less duty than such as are in constant service with appointments of ten or twenty pounds a year? Why should not the wealth of the church be more equally and charitably divided? But so it often is, that the more churchmen have,

the more they seek, yet the less they do. To all this I wish it were not in my power to add ; but it is true, and I must add it, that whatever corruptions have crept into the church, did so by the contrivance, at least by the connivance of churchmen, and were never afterwards removed by their consent.

They are always forward to complain of innovations, and of disturbing things that are settled. But who have made more innovations than churchmen ? Who have more disturbed and changed religion and states, by their ambition, by their disputes, by their turbulent behaviour, and exorbitant claims ? And who are so much given to change ? What changes, what violent and lawless changes, were there not wrought by Laud and his brethren in his time, and always attempted by those of his spirit ever since ? The laity have been only on the defensive, warding off the attempts and monstrous demands of such of the clergy, and answering their wild writings. What is a great part of ecclesiastical history, but a continual detail and repetition of the efforts of the clergy to govern mankind, and to master the world ? Was not this an innovation with a witness, a propensity to change, an actual and alarming change ? Were they not continually attempting to be what they were not, to have what they had not, still to be richer, still to be greater ? Could there be a greater change than from the almsmen of the people to become lords and princes ; from poverty and humility, to rise to mitres, and diadems, and dominion ? And could such a change, a change so mighty and unnatural, be accomplished without turning the world upside down ?

This is something more than *quieta movere*, something more than disturbing things that were settled. Did not Laud actually master and abolish the laws of his country, assert the independency of the clergy upon the civil power, and terrify the judges from issuing prohibitions, as they were actually sworn to do ? And did the spirit of Laud, and this passion in the clergy of his stamp, for dominion, independency, and princely revenues, die with Laud ? No : they have even improved upon his scheme, and added, if possible, to his wild and enslaving pretensions ; and, as a proof that they were the pretensions of the body, at least of the majority, the convocation could never be persuaded to censure them.

In short, whoever doubts whether they (I mean all along, such of the clergy as ambitiously pursued power) have not been the authors of changes in the world, of great and calamitous changes ; whether they have not themselves changed and degenerated from their patterns and original ; need only read history, and compare them with Christ and his apostles ; compare their pretensions, pomp, luxury, and possessions, with the simplicity, humility, labour, and disinterestedness of the primitive Christians.

The truth, I doubt, is, when they make this complaint, which is very usual with them, that it is not safe to disturb things which are established, they only mean to discourage people from disturbing them in their favourite pursuit after power and riches. Whatever is established by the New Testament, and the law, no man that I know is for disturbing. But if they have aims and demands which are neither warranted by Christ nor the constitution, it is right, and Christian, and legal, to disturb, and even to defeat them.

Such high claimers therefore of princely rule and opulence, (if there be any such) are the men given to change; and it is always just to oppose usurpation, to redress grievances, remove nuisances, and to attack fraud, avarice, and nonsense.

It would be endless to deduce particulars. But suppose any assuming clergyman were so extravagant, and daring, and had so little regard to conscience and public tranquillity, as to attempt to establish an ecclesiastical tribunal in our colonies abroad, to the terror and affliction of our brethren there, who were many of them first driven thither by the oppression and barbarity of such courts here, especially in archbishop Laud's reign; would not such an attempt tend to a bold innovation, and discover a busy, an arrogant, and dangerous spirit in such a clergyman; and would he not be a good subject, and an honest man, who set himself against such a lewd attempt, and exposed its wicked tendency?

Suppose any other clergyman, such an enemy to the civil constitution, and to the church of England, or such a deserter from it, as to contend for the independency of the clergy, for their exemption from the civil laws, nay for trying a clergyman, when he is to be tried, by a jury of clergymen; would not such a man deserve severe animadversion and punishment; and would it not be honest and meritorious, to defend the laws, and repulse this their enemy, this innovator, this Papist?

Suppose any other designing priest, fond of promoting superstition for the ends of authority and gain, should abuse the credulity of the people, by pretending to convey holiness into ground and stone walls; as if earth, or stone, or any thing inanimate, were susceptible of sanctity, or their quality to be altered by solemn words; and all this without any colour of warrant from law or gospel, but in opposition to the spirit of both; would not such a crafty priest be a false guide, an innovator, who relinquished truth, and the Protestant religion, to promote error, and to introduce Popery and delusion? And would not he who resisted and confuted him, be a friend to society, a defender of truth, and a foe to fraud?

Suppose any clergyman so bent upon exalting churchmen and their revenue, (for, the sure way of raising them is to raise that) that he encouraged designs and schemes for transferring the whole wealth of a nation, by no slow degrees, into the coffers of the clergy; would not such a man be a promoter of change, of an universal and melancholy change, and a declared enemy to the laity? And would it not be becoming laymen, nay, incumbent on them, to be upon their guard, to secure their estates, and to preserve themselves and posterity from poverty and vassallage?

Suppose (once more) that any other clergyman should have the boldness to declare publicly, that a brother clergyman (a bishop for example) still continued a true bishop of the church of Christ, even though he stood convicted of, and deprived for the highest and blackest crimes, namely, perjury, disloyalty, conspiracy, treason and rebellion; would not such a declaration be highly insolent, scandalous, and punishable? To tell those who make priests, that they cannot unmake them, nor one of them, would be to tell them, that priests are above the law and the laity; that the clergy have a power and de-

signation, which laymen cannot take away, though the laity and the law actually create them, and confer upon them the only designation that they can have, nay, confer their whole office : nor does our constitution particularly own, or know any character in any subject whatsoever, but what the law alone bestows ; and all the clergy renounce upon oath all power whatsoever, but what they derive from hence. An act of parliament would to-morrow effectually degrade all the clergy in Great Britain ; that is, reduce them all to laymen, and create so many priests immediately out of the laity, without a jot more apparatus or ceremony. Whoever is declared to be a priest by any society, is a priest to them, and ceases to be one the moment they declare him none. The strange notion of an indelible character is ar- rant nonsense, and true priestcraft, nay, the ground-work of all priest- craft. Would it therefore be borne by an assembly of law-makers, so tender of their liberties and of Protestantism as ours, to have this same indelible character, this root of Popery, maintained to their faces ? And would it not draw down their indignation and censures upon the bold offender, I had almost said, deceiver ? Surely it would ; and therefore,

I mention these instances as bare possibilities, which can never be suffered in this free Protestant country, but are common in Popish countries, nay, are some of the reigning tenets, and practices which support Popery. How zealous Laud was in such Popish practices and tenets, I have not now time to explain. Read his Life and Trial.

It is now high time to draw towards a conclusion, by considering briefly what produced the tragedy of this day ; a consideration which will lead us to see how such tragedies are to be prevented. The immediate instruments of the king's murder were violent men, supported by a powerful army, gained and commanded by an usurper. This power in the army, and his power over it, were the effects of the civil war, which was itself caused by the misunderstanding and struggle between the king and Parliament. What originally produced this mis- understanding, which produced all the rest, is what we are principal- ly to attend to. It is of much less moment to know by what hands the king fell, than to know how such hands, or any hands, came to be lifted up against him.

Now, if we enquire into the first cause, from which all the rest naturally followed, we shall find that the violence of his reign caused his violent end. It is not to be denied nor disguised, that from the very beginning the court aimed at arbitrary power, openly pursued it, and for fifteen years together practised it, raising money without law, and against law ; which was robbery in those who enforced the collec- tion of it. Imprisoning men, the best and greatest men, without law, and against law ; which was lawless cruelty. Seizing the lands and estates of others without right, and against right ; which was fla- grant oppression and violence. Assuming and exercising a power to dispense with laws, that is, a power to make and annul laws ; which was manifest usurpation. And, in short, establishing an arbitrary and Turkish authority over the persons, and rights and fortunes of the peo- ple ; which was apparent and undeniable tyranny.

Between law and violence, between right and tyranny, there is no medium, no more than between justice and oppression. If king

Charles had no right to act thus, then his acting thus was tyranny. If he had a right, of what force are laws and oaths ; and where is our constitution, the boasted birthrights of Englishmen, and our ancient *Magna Charta* ? Why was his son king James turned out ; why declared to have forfeited ? And I would ask the admirers and defenders of king Charles I. how they would have liked, how borne such violences, such lawless doings and misrule in king William ; how in the late reign ; how in this ? How would they have relished the imprisonment of their persons, taxes laid on, and exacted without consent of Parliament, arbitrary and excessive fines, their estates seized, their families impoverished or famishing ? Doubtless, no men would have been louder in the cry of tyranny ; and very just and natural would have been such a cry. No sort of men talk more warmly and frequently now in favour of liberty and law. How do they reconcile such zeal and professions with an approbation of the reign of king Charles I. which was one continued series of oppressions, had abolished liberty and law, and established universal slavery ? How would they have borne such terrible and tyrannical usage ? Very impatiently, I dare say. If they say otherwise, no reasonable man will believe them, nor have they, upon trial, ever shewed much passiveness of spirit. Besides, if they justify the enslaving measures then, they are not in earnest, or utterly inconsistent with themselves now, when they extol public liberty, and are for restraining kings and their ministers to reason and law.

What we have therefore to do on this day, is not only to abhor the bloody death of the king, and wicked instruments of it, but to abhor also his evil and wicked government for fifteen years together ; abhor the impious principles which were then countenanced and prevailed, with the traitorous and ungodly broachers and promoters of such ; and all the evil and arbitrary counsellors then and since. And as we lament his latter end, let us detest the beginning and course of his reign, which was as enormous and guilty, as his catastrophe was mournful and barbarous. Was it crying guilt thus to cut him off, as surely it was ? Was it not also crying guilt in the crown to abandon its duty, to violate the coronation oath, to tread upon law and justice, to persecute conscience, to rob and oppress the people, and from limited and lawful, to become lawless and arbitrary ? And is it not equally reasonable, equally becoming us as Englishmen and freemen, to commemorate and detest an administration so pernicious and devouring, measures so black and lawless ? Is it not our duty to take warning by them, and whenever we are threatened with them, to guard against them ; to watch every principle of slavery, and suppress it betimes ; to rejoice that we live in happier times, live in a free government, and under the free course of the laws ; to pray for the continuance of such an invaluable blessing, and be dutiful and assisting to that good and great prince, who secures it to us, and claims nothing to himself, but what our parliaments and the known laws give him ?

Let us also learn a lesson from the behaviour of the clergy at that time ; and as they were then become wanton with extravagant power, and used it very cruelly, in persecuting and oppressing their fellow subjects ; let us take care for the future, that they who are set apart for the purpose of holiness, be not spoiled by the unnatural possession and

exercise of wordly business and authority. Methinks it is profaning holy men as they are, to embark them in secular affairs, in the commerce and occupations of laymen and worldlings. As they miserably misled that unhappy prince, king Charles I. it may serve as a warning to other princes from being led by them. And as they promoted and justified all unlawful and merciless impositions upon the laity ; as they contended that we were obliged to undergo all servitude, to be tame slaves to the mere will of the prince, and to obey it as our only law ; we may from hence infer, that whenever they leave preaching the gospel, and turn courtiers and politicians, they are out of their elements, and thence grow more wild and extravagant, as well as more wicked and shameless, and false, than other men are.

It would never have entered into the heart of a layman, that the merciful God authorized iniquity, perjury, perfidiousness, and tyranny ; and that any miserable wretch, who had all these crying sins to answer for, was still sacred, and the vicegerent of God ; or that God, who hates wickedness, had forbid to resist, that is, to remedy the highest and most complicated wickedness, nay, damned all who had sense and virtue enough to do so.

These positions were monsters, formed by clergymen out of their sphere, and in high fashion with Laud and his associates. Was it very natural for the laity to love and reverence such clergymen, or these monstrous positions ? “ The Lord said unto me, the prophets prophesy lies in my name ; I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them. They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of nought, and the deceit of their hearts.” Jer. xiv. 14. Would it not therefore be prudent to keep all clergymen from thus exposing themselves to hate and ridicule, and from promoting mischief and misery amongst the laity ? And is not this their guilt infinitely more heinous and aggravated, than that of the greatest private sinner can be, as it affects and involves whole nations, and is impiously covered with the veil of religion ?

According to this rule, and I think it a true rule, the blackest felon that ever suffered, was an innocent in comparison of Laud, and those of his heaven ; and had Laud consumed his time in debauchery, he could have done but small hurt, compared to what he did as a troubler and seducer of the world. His morals as a private man, did but beighten his credit to do mischief. With what an ill grace must such men rebuke private vice, and the detail of sins, they who vend and commit sins by the gross ? This is indeed to swallow camels, and strain at gnats. Crimes are to be measured by their consequences ; and he who persecutes men, he who misleads them and enslaves them, is the most guilty, the most monstrous and gigantic of all criminals. Had Laud been a parish priest, and confined himself to the duties of one ; or, being a bishop, had he done so ; he, who was a man of learning and morals, might have been an innocent, nay, a useful man. But as he and his brethren would needs sway the court and the nation, they over-
turned both by the wickedest of all means, even by an excess of tyranny and oppression. It was they who raised, or at least increased the storm, which at last ruined the public, and overwhelmed them in the public ruins.

These therefore are the things and persons now proper to be commemorated. From these we are to take our marks and warnings, against a relapse into the like evil days and calamities. And if there be any curse still subsisting, derived from the king's blood, it must justly lie upon them who approve the men and measures that first rendered him arbitrary and oppressive, and thence unpopular and distrusted. Here the evil began, and from hence it was propagated like a train. Had he always ruled as he afterwards too late proposed to rule, when men were irritated and engaged, and full of distrust, there had been no civil war, nor a conquering army, nor an Oliver, nor consequently royal blood spilt. His design and promises to govern better afterwards (when he found that the laws and constitution would prevail) have been often urged and repeated, and are a confession that he had governed ill before. Perhaps he meant to perform them. It is certain his misrule had been sadly felt ; nor is there any proof but his word, that he intended to change : that word had been often and egregiously broken, especially in the bill of rights, which he solemnly promised to observe ; yet he afterwards openly violated that just bill.

How this prince comes to be still so extremely popular amongst many of the clergy, and consequently amongst many of the laity, influenced by them, is obvious enough. He was a very great bigot to the church, to ceremonies, and shew in religion, and to the power and pomp of churchmen. These he cherished, and exalted, and obeyed ; invested them with his own power, and surrendered to them almost the whole supremacy ; and not only suffered them to enjoy the use of it as a present from him, but suffered them to seize it for themselves, and even to deny his title to it. For such court and favour to them, for humouring them in their persecution of the Puritans, for his glutting them with power, and becoming their creature rather than sovereign and head of the church, they promoted and consecrated all the excesses, oppressions, and lawless measures of his reign, because all these violences were exercised over the laity ; and the churchmen were so far from feeling them, that they shared in his domination, and acted the king too in their place and turn. This is the true source of so much merit and praise ; for this he is adored and sainted ; for this he has been often compared to Jesus Christ in his sufferings ; and for this the guilt of murdering him has been represented as greater than that of crucifying our blessed Saviour.

These their panegyrics are, in truth partial and shameful in all respects, as well as impious and profane ; since thence they who utter them make it evident, that they care not how a prince abuses his trust, and oppresses his lay subjects, if he will but humour and aggrandize the clergy ; else why so much incense and applause bestowed upon a prince who actually did so ? This is partial and dishonourable : nor can there be a greater insult upon the laity, than to desire or even hope, that they should join in such praises and applause. They who feel oppression, cannot extol him who commits it, nor reckon him a good king, who uses them like slaves.

No sort of men are more tender than the clergy, when their property, or persons, or privileges are touched, or more severe and resenting, or even more unforgiving towards such as meddle with either. I fear much, that had the clergy been then used as the laity were, treated

se mean slaves, worried with arbitrary power and impositions, and imprisoned upon mere will and command; this day would not have been commemorated at all, or perhaps commemorated in a very different manner. Why should not the laity too have felt and resented indignities done, and violences committed against the laity? Was it natural or possible to praise and honour the author of such violence and dignities? When the clergy were pleased and gratified, they might rejoice, though it be not generous to triumph, when others suffer, nay, endure such sufferings. But the laity could not express joy, when they had just cause to sorrow and mourn; or was it possible they should?

Such is the difference between the laity and the high clergy, with regard to king Charles the First, and archbishop Laud. They adore the archbishop, because he raised their power beyond all reason and law, and was furious in the exercise of such usurped power: they love the king for suffering such encroachment, for being subservient to the pride and pursuits of churchmen, and for dividing the sovereignty with them. But as both the king and the archbishop abused their power, oppressed and persecuted the laity, the laity can commend neither; and have good reason to pray, that they may never see such a king, nor such an archbishop, any more for ever; and bless God for their present happy and different situation. This is indeed just and pious cause for joy and thanksgiving. King George reigns, the laws prevail, dissenters and private conscience are protected, the clergy receive their dues, and to all men their property is religiously secured. This is protection, this is liberty, this is renown, and we are happy, and ought to be dutiful and content.

As to such churchmen who will be contending, that the clergy are a distinct body from the laity, with separate interests and views; they cannot be surprized to see, that the laity improve the hint and example and take care of themselves. It is very natural for the laity to remember, that they alone give and continue to the clergy what they live, and make them what they are. It is natural for them to be alarmed, when they bear the lawless rule of king Charles the First applauded, his lawless and oppressive measures justified or excused, and himself sainted and adored. This is a bold and awakening insult, and a full declaration, that if high churchmen can but flourish and domineer as they did then, they care not how much the laity droop and decay; nay, approve and encourage the bonds and distresses of the laity: and as a proof how violent in earnest such high churchmen are in their panegyrics upon that king, and his reign, they treat as monsters, and false brethren, all impartial clergymen, that refuse to falsify and daub as they do; insomuch that such reasonable and moderate clergymen as confess the truth, and love the law and the laity, and are willing to do justice to both, are scorned, and derided, and reviled as high churchmen, that is, as friends to the constitution, to liberty, and to clergymen, and such only as the laity ought to esteem. Surely the laity cannot but consider as open foes, such men as vindicate the oppression and bondage of the laity: and that the laity were thus used by that king, is fact; and 'tis fact also, that in using the laity thus, he was assisted and prompted by all high churchmen then, and justified by all high churchmen ever since. Is it not full time for us laymen to see these things, to resent such insults, and to mark such insulters? Is it not fair in us, is

it not natural for us, to distinguish with all countenance and favour, those clergymen alone, who contend for the liberty and rights of the laity, and condemn all the mad and extravagant claims, and all the selfish and violent tenets of high churchmen?

As to the black fact committed on this day, all men agree to condemn and abhor it, as utterly unlawful, violent and full of guilt. But this is not enough for high churchmen unless all the oppressions and excesses, all the wicked counsellors and instruments of that reign be likewise excused if not extolled. This is what they themselves have ever confidently undertaken to do, in the face of the most glaring truth and facts. How we laymen ought to consider this day, and these men, I have already said. In truth, had there not been such men then, there had not been such a day now. By them the unhappy king, of himself very vain of unbounded power, and fond of setting royalty above right, was abetted and encouraged to pursue such measures as ended in much misery to him, as well as to his people: by such men his son was tempted to try the same dangerous and guilty experiment; and by trusting to such men, to their unnatural whims and deadly flattery, he lost his crown and his honour, lived an exile and died a beggar.

From hence, and from all that has been said, let us learn a lesson proper for this day, and for every day; that is, let us take great care, according to the words and warning of my text, *that the hypocrite reign not, lest the people be ensnared.*

. P. S. The author of this sermon finding his matter increase, and his sermon already too long, reserves what he has further to say, to a supplement, addressed to a very important and most solemn churchman.



A Supplement to the Sermon preached at Lincoln's Inn, on Jan. 30, 1732. By a Layman. Addressed to a very important and most solemn Churchman, Solicitor General for Causes Ecclesiastical.

HOLY FATHER,

I APPLY to you without form or compliment, about certain doubts and difficulties, which, I am told, no man is so fit as you to answer and resolve. Your great abilities (I do not say in divinity; for that is a very different thing, but) in canons, distinctions, discipline, and all parts of church attorneyship, are allowed by all men. Even such as dispute his Majesty's title to the crown, allow you that of an excellent churchman. As I aim at no preferment, and therefore bring no incense, I was willing to shew you, that it was possible to dedicate to you without worship or daubing. Besides, I take this my address to you to be exceeding suitable; since you, who have made church power and church revenues so much your care and pursuit, are a proper judge, whether what I have said of the evil influence of church power, and revenue over religion and human society be true.

You who must have traced ecclesiastical grandeur up to its first sources, and marked its progress, improvements, and variations, can

readily explain how it arose, how it was used, whether righteously acquired, whether honestly employed, how it affected the laity, how the clergy; what tendency it had to advance religion and civil happiness, what success in mending the morals, and increasing the humility and pious labours of churchmen.

You, who are known to contend for ecclesiastical authority, can demonstrate what that authority is, whence derived, by whom, and over whom to be exercised, how to be reconciled to conscience, Christianity, and common sense; whether it can produce or preserve conviction, and make men Christians, or continue them so; and whether such authority be consistent with reason and grace, or whether reason and grace do not exclude and destroy such authority; as also how such authority consists with the oaths of the clergy, who swear to renounce all claim to any power of any kind or sort whatsoever, but what they derive from the crown.

Pray tell us, what any clergyman can do, which any layman, who can read and write, cannot do, and may not do, if the law appoint him? Is it not the law alone, which has the power to qualify, and can alone disqualify? Whoever maintains the contrary, incurs a Præmunire. Have the clergy any Revelation but the Bible? And is not such Revelation made to the laity, and indeed, without restriction, to all men? And are not the necessary and practical parts of the Bible very plain, and intelligible to laymen? And have clergymen ever agreed about explaining the dark parts? I wish none had ever endeavoured to darken the clearest parts of it, or to hide and suppress the whole. If the assertion of any powers invincible in men, that is, powers which have no visible effect, be other than a dream and forgery, you will do well to shew what they are, whence they are, and how they effect their strange and invisible feats. To read prayers, and scriptures, and sermons, to give bread and wine, and say words over them; to sprinkle water upon babes; to declare what offends God and his law; and to wear gowns and bands, and broad hairs, are exploits which may be performed by very mean men amongst the laity: and to judge and declare who are qualified to perform them, is a task as easy as the rest. Will you say, that such functions are less effectual in a layman, or more so in a clergyman? Who told you so? It may be so said in the old Popish canons, or schoolmen, and in the extravagant writings of some ecclesiastics; but no where in the New-Testament.

Will you say, that God blesses any pious office done by a layman, less than when done by a clergyman? And what idea would this give us of God? Will you say that a little infant, free from offence, and incapable of offending, is therefore debarred from heaven, or any part of bliss, because he dies unbaptized, or was baptized by a layman? And what idea does such a tenet exhibit of the divine Being? Or, if a layman can do this sacred office effectually, why not more offices, and all?

You know what impious notions many clergymen have broached, and held about baptism, as if no salvation could be had without it, and no baptism without them. This is one of the monstrous, I had almost said blasphemous whims, resulting from the other monstrous whim, that of an indelible character; which is a whim so very strange and

inconceivable, that where 'tis once believed and established, 'tis no wonder to see the wildest extravagancies, and even impossibilities and contradictions maintained and believed in consequence of it: since from any senseless position whatsoever, endless deductions of nonsense can be drawn, and may seem naturally to follow; and one contradiction shall produce, and illustrate, and prove an hundred contradictions. Thus, if either the indelible character, or apostolic succession, or infallibility, or power of binding and loosing be but allowed; from these, or any of these, all the most fraudulent, fanatical, and engrossing claims of the Pope, and Popish clergy, may be deduced and established.

May not a layman perform all spiritual offices, where there are no clergymen? Is a chapter of the Bible less edifying when read by a layman, than when read by a clergyman? I ask this the rather, because I knew a tradesman, who read prayers and the scripture on Sundays at a foreign fishery, where there were no clergy, and he was therefore thought proper to be put into deacon's orders, as if he had been thence the better qualified for reading prayers and the Bible. Was this employment in him either more sacred, or more effectual, afterwards than before? If it was, What an idea does this too give us of the great God? Or, have the clergy succeeded better than laymen, in appointing one another? Father Paul says, and history says the contrary. That excellent writer lays it down as fact, that the best bishops were made by princes; and that, whenever the clergy had the conducting of their own elections, infinite disorders ensued. So little, or so ill effect had their indelible character in making and appointing one another. Was not this pretence to an indelible character, one great source of Popery and the inquisition, and of all the terrors, frauds, and deformities of priestcraft? And was it not natural for indelibility to produce infallibility; and is there more to be said for the former, than for the latter?

I should also be glad to hear you discourse rationally about pluralities and commendams, and shew their consistency with the duty and call of such churchmen as possess them. As they who do not reside, do not labour; should such as do no work, receive pay? *Beneficium propter Officium*, was the stile of old; and benefices were given for spiritual purposes. Indeed the temporal part was only considered in a second and circumstantial sense. "Afterwards, says father Paul, the spiritual part was forgot, and nothing but the profits regarded." This was lamentable corruption; yet such as dealt in it, and, in truth, in little else, called themselves holy men; that is, the most sordid, the most corrupt and covetous, such as made traffic of churches and souls, assumed to be holy, and claimed an indelible character.

In the primitive times, it was scandalous and forbidden, that any clerk should quit his cure, though ever so poor, for another, though richer. It was alleged and ordained, that if any bishop despised his bishopric for being small, and sought after a greater diocese and larger rents, he should not only never obtain the greater bishopric, which through avarice he desired, but even lose that which he already possessed, and through pride despised. What can be a more sacred trust, than a trust of souls; what so important? Does it not require all the time and attention that mortal men can bestow? And how is such duty

to be reconciled to pluralities and commendams, how to non-residence ? The holding of more churches than one, was adjudged by some principal fathers of the primitive church, to be spiritual polygamy : and I question whether a plurality of wives, though felony by our law, be so sinful, or can have such bad consequences, when we consider that some pastors who are greatly endowed, hardly ever see the faces of their flocks : some have several flocks, and feed none of them, but take vast pay for nothing, and employ underlings for poor wages. If these underlings and these poor wages are sufficient, as by their practise these great clergymen shew that they think, is it not natural for the laity to desire to make as good bargains as the clergy ? Is it not natural to conclude, that since the highest and most solemn offices may be performed at a small expense, as is manifest from the hiring of curates, it would be but prudence to save such high revenues given to such as do nothing but hire others ?

How a spiritual trust once conferred, could be afterwards delegated to another, the trust itself transferred, and the advantages reserved, I could never yet account either from the gospel of Christ, or from the natural ideas of morality. Yet are not great revenues daily desired upon the erection of any new church, though he who is to enjoy them, often does no duty at all, but leaves it to a cheap hireling ? And is not that service, for which the parish is to pay many hundreds a year, often performed for thirty or forty pounds a year ? Some civil trusts may be thus executed by deputies ; but is this a way to deal (I had almost said to traffic) with souls, and to be answerable for them ? Is this spiritual fatherhood ? Is this apostolic, or are those who do so still successors to the apostles ? I should be glad to hear you explain this, and shew whether any man who professed to turn religion into a trade, could act in a different or more lucrative manner.

I have likewise some doubts to propose to you about excommunication, which, I fear, is little understood, and greatly abused. If it were originally no more than turning a man out of a society, with the laws of which he would not comply, as was really the case, and as is daily done in common clubs, and in juntas of traders ; is it not notorious abuse, as well as extremely daring and wicked, to construe it into the dismal delivery of a soul to the devil and damnation ? Will you say, dare you venture to say, that a person excommunicated is in the power of Satan, and that such a sentence sends him thither ? If it do, they who pronounce it, must be the most wicked and impious of all men ; nor can any earthly consideration excuse them. Is it for tithe ? Then is their tithe dearer to them than an immortal soul. Is it not for tithe, but for contumacy, in not appearing and owning their jurisdiction ? Then is their pride and jurisdiction of more weight with them than the salvation of men ? But if excommunication have no such effect, why is not the bugbear removed, by explaining it into a reasonable and a Christian meaning ? Or rather why is a practice which cannot be of God, suffered to continue, why impiously continued in his name ? And can any man who defends excommunication, argue against purgatory ? The temporal effects of it are sufficiently heavy and hard ; so hard, that nothing under the highest consideration can justify the man who brings them down upon another. Its spiritual operation, were it true, would indeed be shocking and frightful. But

who would affront the divine Being, by believing that he, the author of mercy and wisdom, could contradict his own nature, to gratify the peevishness and cruelty of weak and revengeful men ?

They who are apt to bring the charge of blasphemy against others, often upon very small, sometimes upon very ludicrous occasions, would do well to consider, whether there can be higher blasphemy, than to assert a power in man of directing or obliging the Almighty ; a privilege to apply the might and terrors of Omnipotence, to the perdition of men ? I presume you will not say of excommunication, what I am told the reverend doctor Fiddes says of Popish indulgences, in his History of Henry VIII. " that they were a treasure which the church had been long in possession of."

I leave it therefore to your judgment, whether this spiritual engine be for the service of Christ's church, or for the credit of such as call themselves his ministers ; and whether what is shocking to sense and humanity, can ever be true in religion, or a part of religion, I mean of the Christian religion.

I would also humbly propose it to your serious thoughts, whether amongst your public admonitions and reproofs to the laity, you might not think it advisable, and find cause, to let your brethren the clergy have their share. Are there no prevailing mistakes or disorders among them ? No strange and unreasonable claims maintained by them who are called orthodox, no extravagant writings published, no wild and passionate sermons preached ? Is orthodoxy alone never preferred by you to eminent piety and sufficiency, under suspicion of heterodoxy ? Is the man who asserts " Christ's kingdom not to be of this world," as dear to you as they who would found worldly power upon the gospel of Christ, and erect a priesthood with power, in virtue of being successors to him, who had no power, and disclaimed all power ? Are you equally tender to the failings of laymen, as to those of clergymen ? Or is it your opinion and policy, that the same should be concealed and dissembled, at least not exposed to the profane laity ?

I remember an instance, where I thought the partiality of a more than reverend clergyman too apparent : for whilst he manifested much just zeal for capitally punishing certain beastly offenders against the law, and purity, and design of nature ; I mean lay offenders ; all his zeal cooled, at least produced small effect, in the case of a brother doctor found to have been flagrantly guilty of an abomination for many years, and often in a very sacred place. Yet this doctor escaped with an admonition and a small fine, in a court too where that more than reverend clergyman was thought to have no small influence. And I suppose, that that unnaturall sinner was still esteemed to be a true minister of the church, since he is still left to act as such, and to receive the stipend of such, doubtless to the great edification of souls, and credit of orthodoxy and of Episcopal courts. So far was that more than reverend clergyman from applying, on this occasion, to the secular arm, though he had just before praised it for finding out, and pouring down its deadly terrors upon such bestial criminals.

A little of your public and private advice to your brethren, recommending to them more meekness and moderation, with a behaviour more complaisant, and less litigious towards their people, would be of use. I hear that you give them very different advice, even to be as trouble-

some and vexatious to their people as they can, by departing from settled customs, and starting new demands. Such advice is by no means proper for them, nor do they want it. It is certain, they would do well not to render themselves daily more unpopular and obnoxious by haughtiness, greediness, and law suits. My Lord Clarendon owns, that the clergy of that time, supported and animated by arch-bishop Laud, grew assuming, and lived not well with their neighbours in the country: This bred ill blood towards them; and when they were pulled down, it was remembered how insolently they had behaved when they were uppermost. Hence the easier way was made for the sour and gloomy sett who succeeded them.

The present daily increase of their property, their monopoly of advowsons, their breaking all the Modus's, their frequent success in troublesome suits, and their apparent fondness of such, help to sooth and exalt them. But as all this is seen, and felt, and regretted by the whole body of the laity, it may bring a storm strong enough to overthrow all these advantages. Perhaps too abuses, not now thought of, will be then sought, and found, and severely redressed.

This thought is really painful to me; in the sincerity of my heart I speak it. For I dread all great changes, and all approaches towards such. I would therefore have the clergy provoke none. They must not, in an enlightened age, and an age of liberty, think themselves a match for the laity, were the laity once tempted to exert themselves. Perhaps they were never less a match for the laity than now. Times and countries have been, when the people were so blind, or so awed, that though religion was turned publicly into power and gain, they could not perceive it, or durst not censure it. Such times are no longer, nor is England that country now.

Modesty and meekness, in the language and writings of the clergy, is likewise always commendable, and no more than good policy. The fierce and provoking style is not the Christian, nor the gaining style; and pride and passion are ill proofs of religion. But most unpardonable is the practice of such, who, when a man differs from them in any ecclesiastical point, though utterly foreign from religion, yet charge him confidently with infidelity, let his style be ever so Christian, and his professions for Christianity ever so strong. This practice, follow it who will, is unchristian and malicious, but shamefully common. I therefore like Dr. Conybear's late book, for its temper and civility; nor, as far as I have looked into it, could I find any strokes of pertness or anger; two ingredients very common in the works of Ecclesiastics. Another doctor, of some name in controversy, and an advocate and an answerer on the same side, hath shown such wild transports, such virulence and scurrility, that it is not to be determined, whether the madman, the scold, or the executioner, predominate most in his composition.

I have heard that even you, holy Father, with all your affectation of smoothness and temper, have treated gentleman with very coarse names, for no other reason, than that they differed from you about matters of power and speculation. This was not wise: (that it was ill-bred I do not wonder,) and it might tempt, and perhaps warrant gentlemen so used, to treat you very roughly. A monster is by no means a proper name for gentlemen. some of them as well esteemed, and as

generally beloved as you are. I could paint such usage in colours which you would not like. I could likewise draw such a character of some who are dead (for upon the dead and living, monster and infidel are names, which, it seems, you freely throw ;) I say, I could represent some of them in such lights, such true lights, as would equal, and, I doubt, much foil the best that you can be shown in. I could represent their amiable and benevolent minds, their great knowledge, their elevated capacity, their universal integrity and love of mankind, their scorn of hypocrisy and little party views, of narrow spirits, and of every mean and selfish artifice.

But I want room and time to enter fully into the pleasing and mournful theme. Neither do I think myself qualified to make equal returns to coarse usage. Let me just say, that infidel and infelity, as they are grown terms of anger and reproach, can seldom become the mouth or pen of a candid or well-bred man. Pardon me, when I assert, that every man living has as good a right to differ in opinion from you, as you have to differ from him. If you think or maintain the contrary, you have a monstrous share of pride or folly ; nor do I know a greater monster amongst men, than the solemn hypocrite, who pretends to derive pomp and power, and worldly wealth out of the New Testament ; who would confine the uncontrollable freedom of the soul by human articles and restrictions, and treats such as follow reason, and not him, with spite and saucy language.—But I check myself ; nor will I finish my picture of this sort of monster, lest the likeness might be too glaring. I therefore return to advise you ; and here let me assure you, that it is repugnant to all candor, and unworthy your character, to descend to mean solicitations, and to teaze for prosecutions against such writings and authors as thwart you. In matters of religion, no book which can be answered, ought to be prosecuted ; nor can you find any honour in such prosecution, no more than you can shew charity in procuring it. A minister of truth begging the aid of worldly penalties in a dispute about spirituals, makes a poor, a strange, and a scandalous figure. Such conduct seems only to suit with worldly designs, and to bewray, if not the weakness of his cause, at least his insufficiency to defend it.

To oppose force to just reasoning is unjust ; to answer false reasoning by force, is foolish and needless. A bad cause is quickly refuted, a good cause easily defended ; and Christianity, though it can bear much severity and violence, can never exercise nor warrant any. Nor was the Christian name ever more abused, than when prostituted to justify rigor and violence : and punishment for opinion might indeed be of ecclesiastical, but could never be of Christian pedigree.

You have, holy Father, the reputation of a strong churchman ; and charity obliges me to believe you a Christian ; (for the Christian spirit is not suspicious, no more than revengeful. Be the Churchman still ; but let the Christian predominate, and then I dare say you will never solicit another prosecution. The clergy, to a man, believe your heart bent upon church power, and upon all the means that lead to it. You have also thoroughly convinced the laity in this point, though 'tis said that you had rather they were not so convinced ; and are wont to speak to them in a style not at all savoring of a passion for sacerdotal rule : which behaviour in you is only artful, and must not be called false or insin-

cere, since insincerity is not a Christian virtue. But such art, when found out, loses its use. You would therefore do well to drop such of your grand views as bode not well toward the laity ; for they are upon their guard, and I would not have you put them upon trying their strength and mettle.

Rather take a contrary and securer method ; surrender your weak passes, give up indefensible points, claim nothing but what the constitution gives you, affect not to be more than what the law makes you ; separate not yourself and brethren too much from the laity ; for woe be to you, if ever they should separate themselves from you. If upon examination you find any millstones about the neck of your cause, any excessive absurdities, any contradictory tenets, any terrible claims, any hurtful or oppressive practices, any unpopular principles or rules, such as square not with the general interests and sentiments of the laity. Begin, O holy Father, to throw off such millstones into the sea, lest they pull you thither after them. 'Tis better to quit, with a good grace, even the most favourite point or mistake, than be forced to quit it with shame, and the imputation of obstinacy.

What those millstones, those indefensible points are, I pretend not farther to explain to one of your sagacity. Some of them I have named. In your researches for others, perhaps it may merit some enquiry, or perhaps very little, whether ecclesiastical courts be any considerable support or credit to the cause of the church (for I think religion has little to do with them.) I will venture to say, that excommunication is a matter of very serious, of very melancholy attention, to every man who believes in God, and has a regard for the bodies or souls of men. Are there not moreover some things in the oath given to church wardens, hard, if not impossible to be kept ; either obliging them to be perjured themselves, or uneasy, and even intolerable to their neighbours ? And are there not certain odd and contradictory oaths in the Universities, which are a scandal to religion, and a contradiction to learning, and even to morality ? And does it not become the zeal of any Christian pastor, to remove all such scandals ? And would they not be removed, if religion were as much considered as ecclesiastical policy and power ?

I would likewise humbly propose, whether a true, a good, or even a Christian use has been generally made of the 30th of January ? Whether those of your order have generally acted upon it like ambassadors of truth and peace ? And whether either the civil government of king Charles I. or the ecclesiastical government of archbishop Laud, be proper patterns to be followed in a free and a Christian country ? I think that, in my sermon, I have amply shewn that they are not. Let me add here one remarkable passage out of Rushworth. " About this time (in the year 1636,) the new statutes for the University of Oxford were finished and published in convocation. The preface disparaged king Edward the VIth's times and government, declaring the discipline of the university was discomposed by that king's injunctions, and that it did revive and flourish again in queen Mary's days under cardinal Pool ; when by the much to be desired felicity of those times, an inbred candour supplied the defect of statutes."

Was there ever in any declaration, even from the Vatican, more of the Popish stile and spirit ? The times and government of that excel-

lent prince, that pious Protestant and reformer, Edward the Sixth, are traduced by an English convocation, for his having unsettled the old Popish discipline, and reduced it nearer to the genius of the Reformation. The days of that Popish bigot, queen Mary, are wished for; that is, when Popery, with all its power and fury, was restored, the Protestant religion abolished, and Protestants openly and mercilessly burned; a Romish cardinal is mentioned and extolled for his church government, and Popish superstition; and bigotry, and blind obedience, are represented as inbred candour.

Say, holy father, were the members of this convocation Protestants, or was Laud, who governed them a Protestant? And was it any hardship or wonder, that he and they were represented as Papists? And what was that king who submitted to, and assisted them in all their violent and Popish pursuits? Nay, was their advocate against himself; when instead of asserting his prerogative and supremacy, and supporting the University of Cambridge, who opposed Laud's visitation of them, as what he could not undertake without the king's commission; he, even the king in person, argued for this usurpation, for this invasion of his royalty, for this seizure and impropriation of his power and dignity?

Strange condescension and folly in him, as well as inconsistency of character! fond of exalting the prerogative over the belly of law and justice where the laity were concerned, yet poorly laying it under the feet of the clergy, where the protection of his people, and his own duty and honour, called upon him to preserve and exert it. I shall here add a further catalogue of his oppressions, as the same are summed up in a lively manner by the late excellent Mr. Trenchard, in his *Short History of Standing Armies in England*.

—“ This king's whole-reign was one continued act against the laws: he dissolved his first Parliament for presuming to enquire into his father's death, though he lost a great sum of money by it, which they had voted him: he entered at the same time into a war with France and Spain, upon the private piques of Buckingham, who managed them to the eternal dishonour and reproach of the English nation; witness the ridiculous enterprizes upon Cadiz and the isle of Rhee. He delivered Pennington's fleet into French hands, betrayed the poor Rochellers, and suffered the Protestant interest in France to be quite extirpated: he raised loans, excises, coat and conduct-money, tunnage and poundage, knighthood and ship-money, without authority of Parliament; imposed new oaths on the subjects to discover the value of their estates; imprisoned great numbers of the most considerable gentry and merchants, for not paying his arbitrary taxes; some he sent beyond sea, and the poorer sort he pressed for soldiers: he kept soldiers on free quarter, and executed martial law upon them: he granted monopolies without number, and broke the bounds of the forests: he erected arbitrary courts, and enlarged others; as the high commission court, star-chamber, court of honour, court of requests, &c. and unspeakable oppressions were committed in them, even to men of the first quality. He commanded the earl of Bristol and bishop of Lincoln not to come to Parliament; committed and prosecuted a great many of the most eminent members of the House of Commons for what they did there, some for no cause at all; and would not let them have the ben-

est of *Habeus Corpus* : suspended and confined archbishop Abbot, because he would not license a sermon that asserted despotic power, whatever other cause was pretended : he suspended the bishop of Gloucester for refusing to swear never to consent to alter the government of the church : supported all his arbitrary ministers against the Parliament, telling them, he “ wondered at the foolish impudence of any one to think he would part with the meanest of his servants upon their account.” And indeed, in his speeches, or rather menaces, he treated them like his footmen, calling them undutiful, seditious, and vipers : he brought unheard-of innovations into the church, preferred men of arbitrary principles, and inclinable to Popery, especially those firebrands Laud, Montague, and Manwaring ; one of whom had been complained of in Parliament, another impeached for advancing Popery, and the third condemned in the House of Lords : he dispensed with the laws against Papists, and both encouraged and preferred them : he called no Parliament for twelve years together, and in that time governed as arbitrarily as the Grand Seignior : he abetted the Irish massacre, as appears by their producing a commission under the great seal of Scotland ; by the letter of Charles the Second in favour of the marquis of Antrim ; by his stopping the succours that the Parliament sent to reduce Ireland, six months under the walls of Chester ; by his entering into a treaty with the rebels, after he had engaged his faith to the Parliament to the contrary ; and bringing over many thousands of them to fight against his people.——

“ Upon pretence of the Spanish and French war, he raised many thousand men, who lived upon free quarter, and robbed and destroyed wherever they came : but being unsuccessful in his wars abroad, and pressed by the clamours of the people at home, he was forced to disband them. In 1627 he sent over 30,000*l.* to Holland, to raise 3000 German horse to force his arbitrary taxes ; but this matter taking wind, and being examined by the Parliament, orders were sent to countermand them. In the 15th year of his reign, he gave a commission to Strafford to raise 8000 Irish to be brought into England : But before they could get hither, the Scots were in arms for the like oppressions, and marched into Northumberland ; which forcing him to call a Parliament, prevented that design, and so that army was disbanded. Soon after he raised an army in England to oppose the Scots, and tampered with them to march to London, and dissolve the Parliament : but this army being composed, for the most part, of the militia, and the matter being communicated to the house, who immediately fell on the officers that were members, as Ashburnham, Wilmot, Pollard, &c. the design came to nothing.”

I could quote much more from the same pamphlet ; but, to use the words of the author, “ it is endless to enumerate all the oppressions of his reign.” What think you, holy father, of the panegyrics made upon such a prince for almost a century past by the clergy, or of the clergy who made and make those panegyrics either upon him or Laud ?

I think nothing is more manifest, than that in those days there was a settled purpose both in the court and in the churchmen, to overturn the reformation and the constitution ; nay, each of these designs was well-nigh accomplished ; and it was already the fashion, not only to treat such who adhered to the law, against the violence and mad max-

ims which then prevailed, as traitors ; but the name of traitors and rebels were, by Laud's followers and creatures, bestowed upon our first pious reformers ; and with the reformation itself great faults were found, especially with those parts of it which retrenched the wealth and power of the clergy. Popish ceremonies were daily restored, with the bowings, grimaces, pictures, and forms usually seen at Popish chapels and masses ; and all men were persecuted, many ruined, who opposed such scandalous innovations, tending only to advance superstition and priestcraft.

Why many of these innovations, and such defection from the reformation still continue, I leave you, holy Father, to consider and explain ; I desire this of you, the rather, for that I am told, that you often hold up your hands, and wonder how clergymen can, by their writings, contradict what they have once subscribed.

That you should wonder at this, is indeed matter of wonder. Is there one of you that conforms to the genuine sense, or even to the words of the articles ? Are not these articles Calvinistical ? Were they not composed by Calvinists ? And are you not now, and have been long, all Arminians ? And do you not preach and write against the Presbyterians who defend predestination, which is one of your own articles ?

Will you say that articles, will you say that oaths, are to be taken in a sense different from the words, different from the meaning of those who compose them ? If you do, then you maintain that Papists, nay, that Mahometans may subscribe our Protestant articles, and be still Mahometans and Papists ; and that Jacobites may take the state oaths, and be still Jacobites.

What subscriptions or declarations, or indeed what other ties can bind men, who, after they have solemnly testified that they are called by the Holy Ghost, yet subscribe the direct contrary to what they believe, subscribe the doctrines of Calvin, yet remain antagonists to Calvin ? Is this practice, this solemn assertion of a falsehood, for the honour of religion, or of churchmen ? Or, is it not the direct method to harden men against truth and conscience, and to turn holy things into contempt ? Yet you still go on to subscribe those articles, still to disbelieve and contradict them, yet never attempt to alter or abolish them. Does such contradictory doings shew any regard for religion, or for truth or decency ?

After such departure from the doctrinal articles, you cannot with any decency blame such who differ from your notions about church power and discipline. The church and constitution of England neither owns nor knows any clergyman but such who derive all their power from the law. All others are pretenders, or rather deserters, and would be usurpers, if the laity and the law would let them. Such clergymen therefore as disclaim all power, and pomp, and revenue whatsoever, but what the law and laymen give them, are the only clergy that laymen ought to reverence, or indeed acknowledge. All the rest, who assert a prior right, and have superior demands, should be considered as lurking enemies, or bold invaders, and carefully watched and resisted. Nor is it small want of modesty in you, and such as are like you, to censure such clergymen as adhere to the law and constitution, whilst you assume to yourselves a latitude to dissent from your very

articles, with spiritual characters and powers superior to the law, and independent upon it.

Can any layman, who has common sense, or common notions of truth and liberty, bear with patience a spirit so arrogant, with such a saucy and inconsistent behaviour? Far different, and indeed quite opposite was the spirit of the reformation. Nor is reverence due to any clergyman in whom this last spirit is not found. Neither are they at all clergymen of the church of England, in whom the contrary spirit is found. Can any layman be at a moment's loss to know, what sort of clergymen are most useful and amiable to him; they who set up to command him, and consequently to put chains upon him; or they who claim only the liberty to instruct and advise him, and therefore leave him still as free as he was before?

Be pleased also, holy Father, to instruct me in the nature and efficacy of absolution. Is it authoritative, and proceeding from the power of the priest only? or is it conditional, and only a declaration that God will accept, or hath accepted sincere repentance? If God pardons upon repentance, what force is in absolution, or what use, further than to ease poor sinners, by assuring them, that if they have repented, God has forgiven them? If this be all, any man, even the sinner himself, may pronounce such a declaration upon himself. Or does God stay to forgive, even after repentance, till the priest pronounces absolution? If so, has not the priests a greater share than God in saving men; nay, a superior power, if his part comes first, and his absolution takes place of, and introduces God's pardon? If repentance suffices without a priest, or absolution, then what signifies either upon such occasion, further than for a declaration of comfort? And without repentance, what avails absolution? Will you say that it avails? Or has our blessed Saviour ever said so? You must needs know what extravagant positions, and what impious claims of power, have been confidently derived from this privilege of priests to pronounce absolution, as if it inferred a power to damn and save; though it be really no more than what any man may pronounce to another, or to himself, or to many, if they desire it, or will hear it. Has not this therefore, as well as many other pious practices, been horribly abused and perverted by the ungodly craft of selfish priests?

Whilst I am giving you all this trouble, and tiring you with so many questions, permit me, holy Father, to mix a little comfort with so much freedom and importunity. I am told that your ease and rest are greatly interrupted and broken, by the increase and prevalence of free thinking. Be not too much frightened; the mob and the many will always be orthodox, always true to the church, to holy days, and pious rioting, for reasons too apparent to need mention. The number of free thinkers, that is, of men who bring all things to the bar and trial of right reason, can never be so very great as justly to alarm the clergy, can never greatly diminish the majority of a country, who will always be of the church in vogue, always have religion, if not that of reason and nature, yet surely that of authority, and of the priesthood, who are themselves always conformable to establishments and tithes, and the prevailing faith.

I doubt it will not be equally pleasing to you, to be told, at least to have the public told, that it is by no means free thinking which fills the

gaols, or loads the gallows, or even peoples Exchange Alley, or increases public or private knavery, or contributes at all towards it. Was the South Sea scheme the effect of free thinking? Sir John Blunt was great saint, and frequenter of the ordinances; nor were any of his confederates suspected of deism. Was it free thinking that contrived or promoted national massacres, that of Ireland or of Paris? Has it produced or assisted the inquisition or persecution? Was the monk St. Dominic a free thinker, or was Bishop Laud one? Has free thinking encouraged, or have free thinkers perpetrated particular murders or assassinations? Was Ravillac a free thinker, or was he who murdered the prince of Orange? Or was he one who offered to murder the late king? Are the banditti and assassins in Italy free thinkers? Are not these villains good catholics, and frequenters of churches? Do any of our own thieves die free thinkers? Do they not generally die good churchmen, catholic or protestant, and always of some religion? Was the famous murderess, Sarah Malcolm, a free thinker? Did she die one, or declare that she had lived one?

No; holy father! Free thinking has no proselytes in Newgate or Exchange Alley. I doubt it will be found that it is not free thinking that steals in shops, or cheats behind counters, or robs houses, or cuts throats. Nor is it free thinking that absolves criminals of any sort, much less traitors and assassins; nor consequently encourages such crimes. I could, had I time, enlarge with success on this subject, and convince all men, that free thinking disclaims all alliance with vice and mobs, and dissolute men; and leaves all knaves, profligates and hypocrites, to conformity and creeds, and the numerous train of orthodoxy.

It seems you have likewise found great evils occasioned by people's not coming to church. My own opinion is, that when people find themselves edified by going, they will go; when they are not edified, their going avails not. If the people had the choice of their own ministers, as in the primitive times they had, 'tis more than probable they would go oftener. But when they neither like the man nor the matter, 'tis not likely that they will hear either. I was therefore surprised to hear that some of your scouts and humble agents, (employed, I suppose, to try the pulse of the public) have mentioned compulsory laws, still in force, to oblige people to go to church. Pray, can you reconcile such a law, if there be one, to the principles and laws of toleration? Could any such law be at first procured but by the solicitations of the persecuting clergy? Or could any but persecutors solicit such a law? Is it just or Christian, to force any man to hear what, or whom he likes not? Would a high churchman care to be forced to hear a Presbyterian preacher, suppose in a country where there were no other, as in Geneva? And should he not do as he would be done by? No penal laws whatsoever were, or ever could be prompted by a Christian spirit. And besides this consideration, I wonder how any man can contend for the continuance of tests and penalties here in England, as you do, and yet be against the exercise of such in Scotland. Is this equal justice, or equal charity?

I should be quite too tedious to my readers and myself (to you, holy father, I fear I have been so already) should I but touch every topic that deserves your animadversion, and that of the public. I cannot

forbear mentioning one practice, very common amongst you churchmen, though it be destitute of all candor, of all truth and charity. Whenever any clerical folly, or artifice, or usurpation, or false position, is attacked, he who does so, scarce ever fails of being accused, of having attacked whatsoever is serious and sacred ; and he is confidently charged with irreligion, though he has evidently espoused and defended religion against such as had profaned it, and blended it with superstition and power.

This method of yours may have some effect upon the vulgar ; but with men of sense, it hurts you, by discovering what you mean by things serious and sacred. If by these words you understood only the gospel, and conscience, and the duties enjoyed by either, you could have taken no offence at any writings which commend and vindicate Christianity, and only expose what weakens and defaces it, even the pride, and violence of domineering and superstitious priests. That there are such priests, I presume you will not deny ; nor that such priests act not in all things, or indeed hardly in any, upon the foot and motives of the gospel.

That my late sermon is entirely upon the Christian scheme, and in the Christian stile, I aver, and every man may perceive ; and therefore no man, who regards Christianity and civil liberty, can possibly dislike it. What it attacks, is clerical wantonness, clerical superstition and fury, tyranny and usurpation both in the state and in the church. If therefore, that sermon provoke you, it is manifest what pleases you, what you approve and what you pursue. For myself, I can say truly, and therefore boldly, that my writings are entirely conformable to the religion and laws of my country : nor can any impartial judge affirm of that sermon, or of any performance of mine, what I have often heard the ablest lawyers in this nation affirm of a bulky performance of yours, that it is a libel upon the laws and constitution of England, and ought to be burned by the hand of the common hangman.

Here I humbly bend my knee, holy father, and kissing your vestment, subscribe myself with profound adoration,

Your Great Admirer,

And Dutiful Son,

A LAYMAN.

Lincoln's Inn, March 8, 1732-3.

NUMBER 75.

A View of the Romish Church, in her Heads, Theology, Canons, Miracles, and Saints ; taken chiefly from her own Writers and Champions.

I AM well pleased with the seasonable public zeal against the double headed tyranny with which we are threatened. I therefore here present the public with such a display of Popery, as may serve to ~~use~~ the most stupid and lukewarm Protestants, and undeceive Papists, who are kept by their priests from the true knowledge of it.

According to the Popish historians, and even by the testimony of the best and ablest Popish writers, no throne, no Pagan throne, was ever filled with such monsters of immorality as the Papal throne ; ~~monsters~~ most detestably wicked in themselves, and the constant authors of universal wickedness, imposture, delusion, oppression, robbery, tyranny, murder, and massacre ; pestilent enemies to all good men, and to whatever was good in the world.

These Popes even bear testimony against one another. Stephen VII. thought his predecessor Formosus so horrid a criminal, that he had him pulled out of his grave, and his body thrown into the Tyber. Stephen himself was strangled as a criminal equally horrible.

Baronius, that great advocate for Popery, to which he often sacrifices truth and history, declares Pope Sergius to have been the most abominable of men, living in a brothel, particularly with two celebrated harlots, mother and daughter, who governed the Pope and the Roman church, and made the most of both. By one of these harlots he had a son, who came to be Pope by the name of John XI. a Pope who lived in incest with his own mother. Her name was Marozia, a lady of uncommon fortune, mistress to two Popes, one of them her son.

John XII. professed the black art, and paid divine worship to Venus and Jupiter. He debauched ladies on the steps of the altar, and was famous for all diabolical excesses. This infernal father of christendom was deposed by a council summoned and supported by the emperor Otho. A deposition which the same keen churchman Baronius is not ashamed to censure as an act of presumption, as passing judgment upon one whom no man on earth had a right to judge. So that he was accounted a regular and genuine Pope ; and if he was, why may not the worst and most accursed being be one ?

Boniface VII. murdered Benedict VI. in order to succeed him ; and they were commonly expelling and butchering one another. Cardinal Benno mentions one Gerard Brazet, who was appointed and paid as Poisoner-General to the holy See, and who poisoned seven or eight Popes, at the instigation of such as wanted to be Popes. These Popes were in truth such sons of perdition, that even Baronius owns "the end of the world to have been then thought at hand, as no time had produced such monsters, and so many scenes of horror."

The famous Hildebrand, Gregory VII. filled all Germany with blood, and fire, and famine ; and carried every curse of human tyranny, and

diabolical pride, as far as they could go. Matthew Paris, a Papist and Ecclesiastic, calls Innocent III. a lion in cruelty, and a blood-sucker in avarice. Observe, that this was the Pope who oppressed and plundered this poor nation so long and so unmercifully, during the miserable reign of Henry III. Benedict XII. purchased a lady of condition and beauty from her family for so much ready money. She was sister to the celebrated Petrarch. Lucretia, daughter to Alexander VI. was likewise his mistress, and mistress to his son Cæsar Borgia, as also wife to another of his sons.

..... *Pontificis Filia, Sponsa, Nurus.*

Innocent VIII. left sixteen children ; I need not say, all spurious ; for no Pope can marry. Leo X. boasted “ what treasure the church had derived from the fable of Christ.” Paul III. not only lay with his daughter, but, to have her all to himself, poisoned her husband.

Can that be the church of God, which hath such heads ? Does it become the champions of that church to reproach the reformation, as derived from the lewdness of Harry VIII. And can the humble and merciful Jesus own such polluted, such bloody successors ? Have such carnal, such worldly, and such devilish abominations, any thing to do with religion, or spiritual characters, but to disgrace and extirpate both ?

If we descend from the heads of that church to her great champions and supports, the schoolmen ; the extravagancies and fooleries of the latter are incredible. They are the metaphysics of the heathen philosopher Aristotle, prostituted to maintain the lying claims of churchmen : what is incredible. is explained by what is impossible ; and what is impossible. is maintained by what is unintelligible : imposture is founded upon subtleties ; nonsense defended by sophistry ; contradiction by names and authority ; and a monstrous theology is recommended under barbarous terms. Here follow a few of the important points there discussed, “ Whether it be possible for the Deity to become *feminine* ? Whether the foreskin of our Saviour (cut off in circumcision) be yet taken in the Eucharist, where he is supposed to be swallowed whole ? Whether the body of Christ comes into the elements of bread and wine by the way of deduction, or of re-production ; or if his body had been made of flint, how it could have been crucified ?”

These are some of the deep questions amongst their principal theologians, and are called *divinity* ; as if the further from common sense, the nearer to religion ; and the more mad, the more orthodox.

The Catholic canons are of a piece with the Catholic theology, shameless, immoral, and extravagant. It is a system of chimeras, extracted from the authority and writings of old Popes and doctors ; the dreams and distinctions of pedants, and the decretals of designing pontiffs, set up against the civil law, reason and morality. They assert for instance, that *Meum* and *Tuum*, and the ascertaining of property, was introduced by injustice and violence ; and that, according to the wisest of all the ancient sages, all things are common amongst friends, especially women : that the crimes and failings of the Pope are as excusable, as the robberies committed by the Hebrews upon the Egyptians. By the same ecclesiastical laws, and for the sake of ec-

clesiastical men, lewdness and adultery are treated rather as levities than crimes, and stiled lucky adventures, *Leve peccatum, & quod Galli vocant bonam Fortunam*. gallantries.

The miracles of Rome are so numerous and impudent, so ridiculous, and so impossible, that Protestants, as well as sensible Turks and heathens, would think them invented to disgrace the Roman church, did not the Roman church avow and affirm them; none of them performed before heretics, who only want them, but only before Catholics, who want them not; never worked in public to render them uncontested, but in corners and chapels, as if on purpose to raise suspicion about them.

In the lives of the Popish saints, all published by authority, are found the following miracles gravely asserted, with a thousand others equally ridiculous: the blessed virgin visiting friars in the night: Jesus Christ playing at cards with a nun in her cell, courting nuns, and marrying nuns, his virgin mother being the match-maker: beasts and birds adoring the host: the devil bearing testimony for the church against heretics: an oven heated with snow by St. Patrick; and a pound of honey converted into a pound of butter to please his nurse: St. Anthony preaching to the fishes, St. Francis to the beasts; and neither congregation willing to depart, till the saints had blessed them: the wet habits of friars hung upon the sun beams: the monks entertained in heaven under the blessed virgin's robes: a nun sweetening a vessel of sour wine, and her image upon an empty tub filling it with oil, and continuing it full for some months, for the use of the convent: St. Dominic forcing the devil in the shape of a monkey, to hold his candle, till Satan's fingers were burnt to the bone: a ship carrying the body of a dead saint, piloted by a raven for many leagues: the blessed virgin's successful dispute with some devils, in behalf of a lewd priest, who had been assiduous in his devotions to her.

These strange dreams full of nonsense and blasphemy, are the great proofs, that the Roman church is the true church. But these fooleries and frauds, however subversive of religion, and the genuine marks of imposture, are pardonable, in comparison of her bloody and persecuting spirit, the consequence of her cruel want of charity, the most signal Christian virtue. She damns all who are not of her horrid communion, and murders, or would murder, all that she damns; witness her universal practice, and constant massacres, at Paris, in Ireland, her crusades against the best Christians, the daily fires of the inquisition, and the burnings in Smithfield, especially under queen Mary.

Be warned, O Protestants; continue what ye are, Christians and freemen: your all is at stake, liberty, property, conscience: abhor the harlot, and oppose the tool of the harlot.

An Idea of the French Government. The Spirit of Popery, how terrible to Protestants.

I HERE offer some further thoughts upon Popery ; as also upon the French government. Ours is a government by laws : theirs is a government by will. By whatever prefaces or pretences the king recommends his laws, his own will and pleasure is the last and strongest : this is his constant stile to his Parliament, which is only an assembly of the judges of the several courts of justice, all the king's immediate creatures, created by him, paid by him, and commanded by him. The general states of the realm, representing the kingdom, and resembling our Parliaments, are long since laid aside there. The king has no other rule or limitation in raising money, formerly raised only by the states, than his humour and passions, or those of his ministers. A mean capacity, or want of capacity, royal folly, or royal frenzy, are no disqualifications. His will is still sacred, however extravagantly or stupidly exerted ; and still his pleasure is his law.

Henry IV. with all his great abilities, had no more power than his weak son Lewis XIII. nor was ever half so copiously flattered. His grandson, Lewis XIV. had he studied to give proof (as indeed he needed not) how little he resembled his grandfather, could not have done it more effectually than in his revoking the Edict of Nantz : an act of such inimitable treachery, as could not be charged upon the most faithless Pagan princes ; of such prodigious cruelty, as was never matched by Nero ; of such amazing folly, as would have put the emperor Claudius out of countenance.

This too shews fully, how little the promises and oaths of Popish princes are to be relied on : they are rather snares and wiles, and when they are most plausible, and sound the strongest, generally infer the most danger. He had not only frequently ratified that sacred edict, which was the inviolable band of the inward peace of France, but in all his infringements of it (which might proceed from his weakness, or the subdolous advice of his ministers) he always declared, that he would preserve it inviolable.

Did not our late king James say, and promise and swear every thing, take every oath, submit to every engagement ; yet the next moment violate them all openly, as if they had been words of course, by which he had meant nothing but deceit and insults ? I will be bold to add, as an alarming proof how little Protestants can trust any security or assurance from Papists, that, had king James been sincere and willing to observe his oaths and promises, his religion, or, which is the same thing, his priests, who led him by his bigotry, would not have permitted him. What was an oath to the cause of religion ? And why should he, how durst he, keep an oath so pernicious to the church, and given for the security and success of heresy ? Such reasoning from the keepers of his conscience, would have convinced him of the great guilt of

observing an oath to heretics, and of the great merit of breaking it. It was lawful and even politic, to take it, as by it he lulled his Protestant subjects into security ; but it was absolutely necessary, and his duty, to break it, as it was injurious to his friends the Papists, and obstructed the growth of Popery.

The question is not, Whether it be a doctrine of Popery, to keep no faith with heretics? I think it a needless question : the proper question is, Whether the Papists have ever done it, at least upon principle, or longer than times and necessity forced them? History and universal experience are demonstrations, that they never did.

The edict of Nantz, the wise work of Henry the great, was an eye sore to the Papists from the beginning, though the surest and only remedy for the long and furious civil wars in France ; but bigotry was too strong for public peace, for Christian charity and all human wisdom. The extirpation of Protestants, however accompanied with war and desolation, was the great point in view and the assiduous drift of Papists. The perpetual pursuit of that court (constantly bigoted after the death of Henry) was therefore to destroy that perpetual edict ; for such it was in the name, tenor, and design of it. After continual breaches made in it, Lewis XIV. had the honour to finish its destruction, when he found that the bigotry, perjury, and tyranny of king James, co-operating with his own, made it safe for him to do it. Yet James was not then ashamed to contend for liberty of conscience to all sects here, on purpose to enable Popery to devour them all : a black snare, worthy of that religion, but easily seen through, and frustrated with great spirit by those whom it was spread to destroy.

Queen Mary was raised to the throne by Protestants ; gave them all fair words, and royal assurances ; then made it the great and constant business, nay, the glory of her reign, to burn Protestants. She proved so faithless and furious a bigot, that the most bloody bigot of his time, her husband, Philip II. was, or pretended to be, ashamed of her fury, and bore his testimony against it.

The behaviour of that perjured tyrant to his subjects in the Low Countries, is another instance of the mockery of the faith of a Popish prince. He had solemnly sworn at the altar to maintain them in all their privileges (and surely religion is the tenderest of all) and immediately after manifested the same contempt for their privileges, and his own oath, as he did for their persons, and properties, seizing the one, and butchering the other, with infinite wantonness and cruelty. His defence was (pray mind his defence !) “ That the Pope had absolved him from his oath to heretics.”

Can Protestants possibly trust Papists, when the Papists even with good intentions, can be under no tie to Protestants? Who is it that governs them in all points of religion, but their priests? The priest may be said to give them their religion : For all that they have, or can have, is upon his word ; even the books that they read, they read by his permission, and are permitted to hear no arguments but his arguments.

As the Papists are guided implicitly by their priests, so are their priests by the Pope. Can any man of common sense keep his countenance and say, that the Pope or Popish priests, are friends to this Protestant establishment, or to this Protestant royal family? The Po-

popish laity are, by being Papists, obliged to love or hate by the direction of the Popish clergy. Have the Popish clergy ever hesitated to propagate their faith by fire and sword, and to employ both against Protestants, whenever they had power, opportunity, or even temptation? Wherever they fail to execute such treason and cruelty, it is where they dare not: nor have they, nor can they have, any other restraint. Where violence is like to succeed, and promises them the abasement of heretics, the extinction of heresy, and the exaltation of Popery, it is impious in them not to exercise violence.

All their declarations of being peaceably disposed, and enemies to public disturbances, are insidious. Perhaps too they may be in earnest just at the time when they say so. But when opportunity offers; when their bigotry is awakened by the call of their priests; when the cause of religion is to be served, heaven opened to the zealous and active, and hell to the backward and slow; dare they reason, or hesitate, and look on with unconcern? Dare they then preach peace and submission to an heretical government?

There are, doubtless, God forbid that I should deny but there are worthy, moderate, and peaceable men amongst the papists. Nature hath formed them like other men. But their religion is stronger than nature; and their priests having the direction of their religion, have of course the management of their conscience, and can rouse it or calm it at pleasure. What will not a man do for his soul? And who is to advise a papist but his priest? If he be assured, that rebellion and treason are his duty, will he pause to commit them, when by them he saves his soul, or damns it by his refusal? Will he scruple to burn a heretic, though a kinsman, or a neighbour, when excited by the same premium, and the same terrors?

I am far from calling for any hardships upon papists. It is none to be upon our guard against them. They are the professed subjects of the Pope. The Pope is a professed enemy to our constitution. Can they be, will he suffer them to be, friends to it? They are assiduous in making converts to their superstition: I wish others were equally so in recovering such, and exposing the fraudulent and miserable arguments of the perverters. To me it seems blasphemy against God, to make nonsense and self-contradiction, necessary to please him; such as transubstantiation, and making the salvation of souls depend upon the word or consent of a priest. It seems a denial of Jesus Christ, to kill or punish men in his name, for taking the best course they can to serve him, though it were even a foolish one. It seems an abolishing of civil society and morality, to persecute, or even to tax and mark men for differing in opinion from one another, or to settle penal opinions by a majority, or by the power of one, or by any power whatsoever.

That of the Pope is established in fraud and blood, trampling upon the Scriptures of truth, the power and mercies of God, and the reason of man; supported by fear and ignorance, by egregious nonsense, impudence, false terrors, and real cruelties.

NUMBER 77.

Further Observations upon the French Government. The Excellence of our own, confessed by French Writers.

THE French government, though a mild one for an arbitrary one, is yet a very terrible one to an Englishman. All the advantages in it are not comparable to one single advantage in ours ; I mean the act of Habeas Corpus, which secures, at least rescues, you from all wanton and oppressive imprisonment. In France, by the word of a minister, the greatest, the most innocent subject, may, from caprice, or a whisper, or the pique of a mistress, be committed to a dungeon for his life, or the best part of it, or as long as the minister, or his mistress or minion, pleases. Some have been thus shut up in dismal durance and solitude for years together, though no harm was meant them ; not for any offence, real or imaginary, but only through mistake and likeness of names. Thus a minister has sometimes committed his favourites, and useful agents, who lay in misery for years, and might have perished in it, had not accidents contributed to undeceive him. I think it is Cardinal de Retz that says (I am sure it is some good French author,) that he always dreaded the favour of being removed from a bad to a better apartment in the Bastile, because in the passages there were trap-doors suspected, and armed wheels beneath, where a prisoner was in an instant so minced and grinded as to leave behind him no memorials of his person.

Next to their arbitrary imprisonments, come their arbitrary banishments ; and for small offences they are often inflicted, as well as for great. If any member of the Parliament have the honour and courage freely to remonstrate against registering an oppressive edict (for no edict is valid, unless registered by the Parliament) a few lines presently dispatch him from his seat there, and from the city, into exile : how far and how long, depends, like all things else, upon the anger or mercy of the monarch, or of those who direct the monarch.

Such orders, called letters of the signet, lie in the hands of the ministers, as well as in those of the under governors of provinces, to be used at their discretion, frequently to gratify their own vengeance. Is an intendant piqued against any man of quality ; or a minister against a president of Parliament ? Such a letter is strait sent to him, and he instantly from home, sometimes into a remote province. Is the governor's lady, or daughter, disgusted at another lady in the place, finer and more admired than herself ? Her punishment is decreed, and the poor rival sent a wandering ; a crime is easily forged, and the sufferer has no remedy. The smallest affront to a monk in favour (and monks, God knows, are soon offended !) finds the same compensation ; a victim must be offered to his holy rage. I saw, at Vannes in Bretagne, a lady in years, banished thither from her family in Perigord (some hundreds of miles off) for speaking slightly of that libidinous impostor

the Jesuit Girard, famous for his pretended devotion, and real debauchery, committed with the devout damsel Cadiere.

The abuse of raising and sinking the French coin, at the pleasure of the French king, is most alarming to all men of property : an industrious merchant lies down to rest, happy in his wealth, perhaps twenty or thirty thousand pounds, the just effects of his industry ; and wakes next morning reduced to half, stripped by the edict of a night. When the king's coffers were filled with the money of his subjects, and he had payments to make, he raised the coin to an enormous value : when his finances were exhausted, and he wanted to replenish them from the purses of his subjects, he sunk the coin extravagantly low. How would the English relish or bear such grinding and robbery ?

The French king levies money, and raises taxes, at his pleasure ; and punishes such officers of justice in Parliament, as dare dispute his pleasure. He furnishes the farmers of his revenue (generally upstarts and bloodsuckers) with all his boundless power to raise it how they can. Nor can we be surprised at any the most merciless treatment from such sons of rapine, thus armed with sovereign power to spoil and oppress. It is common to see a whole village stripped of all the effects and furniture in it ; nay, to see the very houses pulled down, the roofs and timbers carried off, and the wretched inhabitants exposed naked to wander and starve.

Has not the English freeholder, farmer, manufacturer, cause to bless his own government, and different happy lot ? These have no arbitrary demands to apprehend, and know to a farthing what they have to pay, long before the payment is asked. If they be injured in their portion of payment, they have easy recourse to tribunals and protectors of their own, generally their neighbours, who will chuse to do them justice, or dare not refuse it.

A French gentleman who travelled through England after the peace of Utrecht, says, in his travels, which are printed, " That he believes that there is no instance in any nation whatsoever, of so great a revenue raised with so much ease to the subject, at so small an expense to the public, and with so little danger to the liberties of the people." A remarkable testimony from a Frenchman ! What is more remarkable, he is speaking of an English tax much decried, our excises. He adds, " What an army of officers does the French king employ, only for his duty upon salt, in the several provinces ? What an army in his customs ? The excise in England (says he) is collected with all possible ease, whilst in France, they are every day making terrible examples, hanging, confiscating, and tearing the poor people to pieces." Mind this, O my fellow citizens ! Learn to love your own desirable condition, and to hate the parricides, who would labour to make you sick of it, and willing to risk or change it. This author observes, candidly, " That the tyranny of farmers of the revenue, who exact payment with rigor, is not felt in England, as it sadly is in France."

" In all the cities and great walled town in France (says another French author of quality, and great family) there are armed men posted at the gates by the farmers of revenue, to examine all who pass. If any one is found defrauding the excise, perhaps under half a crown,

the offender, if a man is sent to the galleys ; if a woman, and poor, she is whipped by the hangman ; if she have an estate, she forfeits it all, or most of it, and lies at the mercy of a brutal farmer. If a man of the first fashion, a great Lord should be found, after severe search, to have in his baggage a pound of salt, of about a penny loss to the farmer, his Lordship's whole equipage is forfeited, his person is imprisoned, and he is fined in a great sum."

Remember this, O Britons ! Rejoice and tremble !

NUMBER 78.

Persecution and cruelty, Marks of Apostacy from Christianity. The Doctrine of Transubstantiation, how impious and impossible. The Inconsistency, Impotence, and Absurdity of all Popish Miracles.

A RELIGION which damns all others, exposes itself at first sight to be suspected of imposture, as it breathes a spirit so opposite to the spirit of the gospel. Nothing but the clearest and most express warrant from the mouth of God, can excuse any man for pronouncing such a horrid sentence against another man. The very name of the man, as well as the name of his maker, ought to be seen in that warrant. No less authority will do. Whoever pretends to it, impiously apes the Almighty ; presumes to do in the name of God, what God himself never did ; and impudently practises a cheat covered and recommended under the names and attributes of truth and piety.

These blaspheming impostors usurp the place of almighty God, and act like Satan in it. They turn religion into a trade, and damn all that refuse to deal with them, and them only. This charm and the gains they make of it, are symptoms of a spirit truly worldly and devilish, of wicked combinations and mountebankry, destructive of all religion, and of all human liberty ; a design which none but the most unrelenting tyrants can attempt, and which the most successful tyranny can never accomplish.

It is against common reason, 'tis against the wisdom and mercy of God, and indeed against all his attributes, and very essence, to presume that he divests himself (all-wise and infallible as he is !) of his indispensable power of eternal rewards and punishments, which he only is able to inflict or bestow ; and transfers the same to any frail human creature, subject to constant weakness, passions and folly, as all human creatures are. To suppose that he does so, is an imputation of wantonness or frenzy, upon the deity, as if he contrived to make sport of the creation, and render men dupes and slaves to one another ; as if he delighted in exalting pride, and oppressing innocence ; delighted in the tyranny and wicked craft of one or a few ; and in the delusion and vassalage of all the rest.

Whom has the Almighty created resembling himself, able to dictate, without opposition, in his name, or to exercise his infinite power, with-

out appeal ? How much the Popes are unlike him, or rather, how profanely most of them have belied him, and how absolutely renounced his rules and laws, I have shewn in a former. The best of them were counterfeits, all usurpers, assuming all earthly, indeed all heavenly power, to which no earthly creature was equal, or indeed had any pretence. Did it appear upon their election, that they had then gained one ability or talent, which they had not before, or lost one failing which they had before ? The father of christendom, the infallible guide of Christians, the unerring vicar of Jesus Christ, instead of better, grew generally worse, more addicted to sinful pursuits, more proud, more unforgiving, more craving, less merciful, and less and less resembling our blessed Saviour. The same behaviour, (still continued, or worse) inferred the same character still to continue, or to grow worse, and consequently the vanity and extreme impropriety, and even forgery of his new titles. His infallibility was a flagrant jest and imposition. As infallibility implies the present aid of the divine Spirit, which does not hesitate, nor proceed by examination, nor stay for better lights ; it was plain that the Pope had no such aid ; for he always acted in form in all perplexed questions, called consistories from time to time ; consulted learned men ; put off the decision from year to year ; sometimes durst not decide at all, and sometimes decided wrong. At least, the next infallible head (his successor) was in the wrong, by deciding it a contrary way. For it was no new thing for Pope to contradict Pope, and to curse one another, each of them always first invoking the Holy Ghost.

The infallibility of counsels is equally ridiculous ; and so were many of their decisions, generally carried by balloting, often by faction, sometimes by fighting ; the members cursing and contradicting one another ; and guided, or rather infatuated and inflamed, by the worst and most unchristian passions.

Infallibility is not to be found amongst men ; it is one of the perfections of God, peculiar and incommunicable ; whoever claims it, may, with the same craziness, or from the same craft and impious purpose, claim omnipotence. Whoever is subject to sin, is subject to error : Are not all men subject to sin ? Have there been greater sinners than the Popes ? And are offenders against the majesty of God, and the purity of the gospel, proper vehicles of godlike infallibility, or proper explainers of the gospel, of itself so plain, as to want no explanation, at least for gospel ends ; and it is profaned, when wrested to any other ! Who can discover the simplicity of the gospel in the various and intricate grimaces of the mass, or any of the meek gospel spirit in such as follow the mass ?

The mass, like the whole of Popery, is invented and calculated for the exaltation and profit of the Popish clergy, and to bind, and blind, and plunder the laity. What can be added to the imposture of creating God by consecrating bread, but that it is the highest blasphemy that ever shocked the reason of man, or gave the lie to demonstration, and the five senses ? Other impostors have devised lying genealogies for the eternal Being, related false wonders about him, pretended great interest in him, with a power to mollify or inflame him, and got a good livelihood out of him, with suitable reverence from dupes and the rabble, and were always striving to frighten such as they could not per-

suade nor plague ; but none of them pretended to make the deity by a word. To Popish cheats, falsely called Catholics, the glory has been reserved of surpassing the highest cheats in Paganism, as well as the highest cruelty and the most extravagant forgeries of Pagans. Holy lies and holy rage, generally found necessary to support all pious impostures, are essentially so to uphold the greatest of all.

For a creature to create the eternal Creator of all things, is a wonderful falsehood to assert, and impossible to be believed, as it is a contradiction too glaring to be conceived by the heart of man, or to be uttered by any mouth, where the mind is not first awed by terrors, or intoxicated by delusions, or corrupted by craft. Can they believe in God, who assert, that the one God can be eaten whole by millions, every day, can be created and renewed and multiplied daily, and still remain one God ? Yet, with these omnipotent blasphemers, it is atheism to deny his multiplication ; so that it is at once atheism to doubt his unity, and atheism to deny that he may be new created every hour, and a box of consecrated wafers contains a host of Gods, all one and the same God. Could the wit of demons invent higher or more profane mockery ? Nor would it be higher mockery in these shameless conjurers to pretend to annihilate their Creator. They might wrest a text as literally to their purpose. Has not our blessed Saviour said to his disciples, " A little while, and ye shall not see me ? A text tending as much to the power of the priest in unmaking God, as the other text, from whence they would derive power to make God.

What reasonable man, what Christian man, would be of a church where this is the prime article of faith, and where damnation is denounced against all who doubt it ? Who would hear, much less follow, such dreadful guides, who maintain such impious contradictions, and burn all who will not profess a sacred lye and impossibility, which is an affront to the Deity, an insult upon the Almighty, or rather a denial of his existence ?

A piece of bread, bread to the sight, bread to the touch, taste and smell, becomes at once, in the logic of priests, and by their legende-main, the Almighty and immutable God, and is sliced into infinite gods : though they impudently maintain, that they believe no more than one God ; yet would burn you alive, if you questioned daily their power and practice of creating gods without number.

They practise the same barefaced inconsistency in their treatment of saints, male and female ; some of them idiots, many of them murderers, most of them mad, all unblessed with Christian charity. They fear and adore these saints ; pray to these saints ; compliment the saints with offerings and divine praises ; ascribe divine attributes, power and miracles to these saints ; yet deny that they worship saints.

Methinks that men thus omnipotent, possessed with power to damn and save, and enabled by the deity to make their maker, should condescend, for the conviction of gainsayers, to do some miracles of a lower and easier nature ; such as the creating a fly, or ordering a dead insect to live ; such as animating a corpse, as well as deifying a wafer ; ordering a common lock to open, or a common door to shut, as readily as they do the mighty gates of heaven and hell ; for these last are miracles which they pretend to work daily.

They indeed tell us of other miracles wrought by their saints : but

desire to see them wrought. Nor can they with any face complain of want of faith, whilst we reasonably complain of their want of miracles. What less than miracles can prove the miraculous power which they pretend to exercise, their marvellous mysteries, and incredible operations? If they can damn a heretic by a word, why not condemn and punish him by the same word? If they can open heaven to a suffering Catholic, perhaps imprisoned for the meritorious offence of committing treason for the service of the holy church, against an idolatrous state, why not order the prison doors to fly open, to the relief of the pious Catholic, and to the confusion of his heretical sects and persecutors? Why not award heretics to death, by the sword of command, as well as to hell? Why not command heretics to take the axe and the gallows to burn or hang heretics? Such exertions of power and orthodoxy would soon frighten heresy out of the land, and establish the Catholic faith, unity and revenues, with renown and splendour.

A famous impostor amongst the Jews, and one of their messiahs (the poor people have had many, and none without followers) Sabatai Sevi by name, the deliverer of Israel by profession, undertook to restore the whole nation to Canaan, with a high hand, and by the power and wonders. He gained easy belief and numerous disciples, some of them in the style of prophets, confirming his commission, and foretelling miraculous effects and events forthwith to him. Great commotions followed; the Turkish divan was alarmed, and sent for the impostor: he was put in irons, yet still asserted his divine character; though he, who was to release and re-establish the nation, could not release himself. His bewitched followers too still believed in him, averred what miracles he wrought, and prophesied that he was to dethrone the Grand Seignior, and even to drag him off in chains. That monarch ordered him into his presence, and by imperial brevity offered him his choice, either to work a present miracle, or to turn Turk, or to be empaled alive. Sabatai, unable to comply with the first, and not liking the third, made no scruple of the second; he declared himself a Mahometan without hesitation, and forwardly laboured to convert the Jews to Mahometanism, a change which he acknowledged necessarily previous to their final restoration. As a proof of this strange force of delusion, his followers still believed in him, even after such open, such avowed apostacy: they said Sabatai was carried up into heaven, and a dæmon had assumed the shape and white hair of the old man, on purpose to disgrace him.

Transubstantiation is the most wonderful miracle that ever was wrought; and if it be false, the pretended authors of it are the greatest impostors that ever pretended to miracles, as all impostors do. I do not only have such as pretend to maintain it, either to abjure their former pretences, or to work a small miracle. If they perform any miracle before competent witnesses, we Protestants may venture to challenge the Papists: if they can work none, we ought to expect their conversion to Protestantism. We have no authority but their word for the mighty miracle of transubstantiation; human reason and the five senses, which alone attest and confirm other miracles, contradict this. I offer them no painful alternative; we call for no impaling, no racks, no lungeons; though these be their last and most conclusive arguments to us.

NUMBER 79.

The natural and dreadful Consequences attending the Success of the Rebellion.

IN the midst of all our public difficulties, and the evils that threaten us (I hope only for a short time) it must give high joy, and equal hopes, to all Britons and Protestants, to behold such an universal, such an ardent spirit in Protestants and Britons, upon the present trial and exigency; with such a glorious abhorrence of the desperate attempts, and bloody designs, of our enemies abroad and at home.

The very attempt to change the government, is a proof of the excellence and freedom of the government. If our government were wretched and weak, and the subjects oppressed and miserable, France would be the first to support an oppressive government, and strengthen the oppression. As the administration is just, and the people free, France will never cease plotting and labouring the destruction of government and people. If in our present situation we are dreadful to France; if we thwart her perfidious counsels, and cripple her tyranny, will not France strive to disable, to enslave, and to ruin, her capital and most formidable foe?

This is her present scheme; she is pursuing her interest, let us pursue ours; if she succeed, we are undone; if we prevail, she is sunk; she must truckle to terms of our imposing; and thus humbling herself to her neighbours, whom she has long insulted, against all shame, and contrary to all faith, she must accept such a peace as they will grant her.

To carry her point, she chooses a person very proper for her purposes, if they succeed; but very proper likewise to mar their success, by letting us see our notorious and alarming danger, in imposing upon us for our king a nursling of the Pope, a pupil of her own, bred in Romish blind bigotry, nurtured in all the principles of lawless sway; one destitute of all property, subsisting by food and raiment from France, taught by his father and his own fate, to hate us; and now armed to punish us, or rather to destroy us.

It hath been truly observed, that whoever comes from banishment to sovereignty, will exercise it with infinite havoc and cruelty: he hath suffered supreme injury, and must be satisfied with equal vengeance. Whoever forced him out or kept him out, is his rightful victim: life and property are claimed together. Great property is always certain gain in the eye of a tyrant; and it is easy to prove it forfeited, by calling the owner a traitor: what numberless sacrifices, what copious forfeitures, must this devoted nation furnish out? A nation almost all heretics; all enemies to the tyranny of France, thence all proper objects of slaughter and bondage; all accursed by Rome, therefore worthy of fire and extirpation.

We must even pay France for keeping this our enemy, for his education, and for all the efforts made for him against us; for her expense

nd supplies in the last rebellion, in the present rebellion, and ever since the revolution ; pay her for establishing him our tyrant, and ever afterwards as the deputy of France : for, if he do not enslave us, he cannot reign over us ; and as he cannot enslave us, without the power of France, we must be slaves in reality, to France ; in name, to her viceroys, who will have the honour to be the chief slave, and consequently the most contemptible, as all are who wear a crown by foreign permission, and reign by command.

To answer all the demands of France, all his own demands (which will still be as great and real, as if he were a real king) together with the demands of his needy and craving followers, who will plead their wants of wealth and land, as abundant titles to both, especially when forfeited to the usurper by resistance and heresy ; all the estates and treasure of heretics and rebels, will hardly suffice. Even the Bank of England, and all the public funds, are all justly liable to forfeiture, as they were established to keep him out, and to secure rebels and heretics against his coming in. What can be more obvious, what more empty, to be so seized, and so distributed ? What more agreeable to the maxims of France and Rome in particular, and to the maxims of Popish and arbitrary sway in general ? The church preferments, so long possessed by an heretical clergy, the church lands, so sacrilegiously usurped by the heretical laity, gentry and nobility, will be hardly sufficient to gratify the hopes, and to compensate the merits of an army of confessors, holy men, who have laboured incessantly, wrote and railled, cursed the heretics, and starved for above half a century, in the blessed view of seeing an obstinate nation ruined, as well as damned Protestants in the flames, and the holy church in triumph.

The old laws must likewise succumb and bend to new masters. Who will dare to hold up an act of Parliament against the mass ? What heretic venture to plead for heretics ? What Protestant lawyer (if any Protestant be left, or one Protestant law) will venture to affront the Pope, or a Popish sovereign, by defending liberty, law, and conscience, in opposition to powers who hold liberty to be rebellion, law to be reason, and conscience to be schismatical and damnable ; all to be punished with a high hand, and instantly rooted out, or crushed by fire and sword ?

A bloody host of robbers from the woods and bogs of Ireland, droves of savages from the rocks and caverns of the highlands, void of letters, and even of humanity, armed with ignorance, brutality, and barbarous zeal, must be turned into an army, to secure a violent establishment by acts of violence ; crazy monks, without mercy or knowledge, must be our teachers, to instruct us in the guilt of Christian charity, and the danger of human reason : a new nobility of upstarts, fugitives, and outlaws, raised from obscurity, chiefly known for their barbarity, original Macs and O's shall swagger (I had almost said wallow) in the highest stations and dignities, bear the grandest titles, without being able to read them, and sink and defile them by wearing them. The old nobility must be extinguished, or beg, or perish ; or, which is worse, be converts, and feed upon the bounty of an usurper, at least subsist at his mercy.

Such wide and wasting violence, and these dreadful changes, are rather certain than improbable. The invader knows, that all able, all

wealthy, all discerning men ; all sober and religious men ; all who love liberty sacred and civil, their property, their Bible, and their conscience, must necessarily hate his person, and abhor his education, his principles and dependencies. They can never be safe till he be defeated : he can never thoroughly succeed 'till they be thoroughly destroyed.

Confusion, extirpation, and massacre, are the known, the approved, the tried measures of Popery, and of Popish tyrants. They think that by cruelty to heretics, they do service to God and themselves : the more cruelty the more service. This principle justifies all rigour and acts of rage and perfidy, and even consecrates them all as holy and meritorious. Charles the IXth of France, in obedience to the dictates of his faith, by a long train of fair usage, kind words, and a thousand caresses to the Hugonots, deluded the heads of them to Paris ; where he renewed and enlarged all his friendly professions, distinguished them as his most welcome guests at the wedding of his sister, betrothed to their chief, the king of Navarre ; granted them many favours, and pretended to be guided by the counsels of their favourite leader, the celebrated admiral de Coligni. When he had thus drawn the principals of the religion together, and lulled them into due security (for when they were prepared and armed, a small number of them was dreadful to any number of their enemies) he ordered them all to be massacred at once, upon a signal given : he was himself a keen instrument in the massacre. The tyrant, as cruel as faithless, not only animated and applauded the most eager murderers, but shot from his window such of the innocent betrayed victims as were like to escape their butchers, the raging Catholics. The carnage was pursued at the same hour all over France. An hundred thousand Protestants fell sacrifices to the moloch of Popery, and to the maxims of French tyranny. The Pope, one of the ablest that ever filled the papal chair, but still a Pope, approved all the bloody guilt, all the internal slaughter, and particularly the murder of Coligni, one of the first heads in Christendom for war and counsel, but unpardonably zealous for the gospel of Christ, and the rights of men.

In one of the Croisades against the Waldenses, two hundred thousand souls in one city were doomed at once to sword and fire, though many of them were Papists. The lay commander, a man of great quality, was for saving those of his own communion ; but a monk commissioned by the Pope, insisted that the slaughter should be general, and left to God the care of his own.

What was the Irish massacre, but an effort of Irish papists, to restore popery ? Popery, and the spirit of Popery, is still the same. King James, in Ireland enabled the wild bigoted Irish, the old murderers in the year 1611, or their murdering descendants, universally to plunder the Protestants there, to divest them of land, dwelling, and daily bread, and to force numbers of them to starve, or to beg their bread in England and Scotland. It was natural to fear that the worst was not past, but the lives of Protestants would soon follow their property, and another carnage would complete the restoration of Popery. The king, who had weakness enough to go such dreadful lengths, had bigotry enough (the most mischievous weakness of all !) to have gone lengths still more

adful, mad as he was for Popery and lawless power ; since he was suaded, that they supported each other. The only sound judgment which he seems ever to have made.

NUMBER 80.

The Views of the Pretender not to be Disguised. His Defence an Insult.

THE young pretender is not the less an invader for his coming accompanied with so few persons. If all that are now about him had come from abroad with him, he would not have been more an usurper, than his greater enemies. The natives are always the greatest enemies to their country, when they are enemies. The Turks are not fiercer enemies to Christians, than the Popish Irish and the Popish Highlanders are to English Protestants. If they have, besides, long smarted as slaves, traitors, and banished out-laws, do they not return with heightened rage, with vengeance still more direful and bloody ? Or, though they have never been abroad, nor felt the punishment and ignominy of traitors ; yet, if they have nourished continual rancour against government, been continually bent upon its overthrow, and long sought its ruin, are they not habitual and ardent foes to all that love and support it ? Can any croud of intruders from abroad be conceived more fierce and implacable ? Could a herd of invading Tartars have found more eager thieves, more merciless butchers and plunderers, than the wild clans following the young pretender ? There is one good resulting from all this shocking evil ; namely, that it is so shocking, that by it he gives us a sample of his government, and of his notions of government. This is so glaring, that they who are not alarmed by it, deserve the sharpest whips, and the heaviest chains, without remission or end.

Does he talk of a free Parliament ? Mockery and insult ! Never was there more free Parliament than ours, or so much property in any Parliament. There are several single members in either house, able to buy every follower he has with all their chiefs. I could name to him the name of one member, who has more wealth upon her toilet than would maintain his army, much better than they now are, after all their boundless plunder.

What English county, or even what small borough, would own him, or give him his writ, or chuse a man fit for his purpose ? He can have no prospect of any Parliament, but a Parliament of Highland robbers, or Irish desperadoes, at best such as they shall choose and admit. What Parliament can he possibly have, but a Parliament like his army, composed of indigents, outlaws, and savages ? What other Parliament would serve him ? He cannot but see the dread and antipathy of the nation, arising fiercely from every corner of it against him : yet he has the audacity and consistency to talk of a new Parliament. The whole na-

tion are his enemies, except some unnatural desperadoes in it ; nor can he ever hope for any Parliament but a Parliament of desperadoes. such as the nation will never choose. Does he mean to have a free Parliament chosen by force ? This was the scheme of his pretended grandfather ; who, like a true tyrant, robbed the electors of their charters, and filled them with creatures of his own : but even his own creatures, abhorring his religion and his tyranny, abandoned the bigot and the tyrant. Is better to be hoped from this proscribed invader ?

Parliaments, he knows, sound charmingly to English ears ; and therefore tries with that sound to charm Englishmen : But, whilst they have the thing itself, they will not be mocked with the grimace, and mere sound.

He comes from Rome, to protect the English church ; from France, to defend English liberty ; a Papist, to protect Protestants. Can there be greater or more insulting drollery ? We enjoy more liberty than any, than all, the nations of the earth ever enjoyed, now or heretofore. We enjoy religion in higher perfection than ever, because every man enjoys his own religion. The church is more secure than ever, because her sons do not disgrace her by seeking to persecute dissenters, nor endanger her by the false factious cry of her danger. His majesty protects property, and defends the laws ; his subjects love and trust him. Never were there known such ardent, such active proofs of popular confidence in a prince.

Here is a system of national felicity, a system unparallel'd throughout the world ! A change from this system implies a fall to final misery and destruction. The bait of a new Parliament is an old snare, the cant of a pretender. His religion and principles (Popish and arbitrary) are our dread and abomination : he is a stranger in his person ; his counsellors and exiles are starving and desperate outlaws : his measures are barbarous ; his soldiers are savages. If he regarded Parliaments, he would have staid till the Parliament had sent for him. He has intruded against the voice of Parliament, and of the nation, the loud and repeated voice of both. He tramples upon law, he plunders property, he imprisons and executes men, he commits universal spoil, yet talks of right ; he profanes the name of authority, and jests with that of Parliament. Did his pretended grandfather love Parliaments ? Would he be advised by Parliaments ? Or did he keep his oaths to Parliaments ?

His very claim, the claim of descent, is a defiance of Parliament, and law, and oaths. If the Parliament can exclude one king, and choose another, then is his claim by blood a bawble ; nay, 'tis treason against the constitution. But, if that claim prevail, then there is an end of Parliaments, and a man may destroy a nation, because he is called, or calls himself king of it, or because his ancestors, nay, because his pretended ancestors, were kings of it. If no disqualification can disable him, then a person unfit for the lowest office in life is fit for the highest ; one that is dumb may utter laws ; a deaf man may listen to counsel, and hear petitions ; a frantic enthusiast may dictate in religion ; and an idiot, or, which is worse, a wilful and perjured tyrant, may govern the state.

Such is his latent claim ; it must be such ; and he dares neither give it up, nor explicitly assert it. The Parliament, many, all Par-

liaments have settled the succession, as it is now settled ; forced to do so by the perfidy, the bigotry, the frenzy, and tyranny of his pretended grandfather. Yet he mocks those that will be mocked, with an appeal to Parliament. He does not, he dares not describe what sort of Parliament he means, how chosen, and how principled ; neither need he describe it ; we can guess his meaning : he must either have no Parliament, or one worse than none. In the members, a desperate fortune, and an implacable spirit, will be the first qualification ; blind bigotry, the next, and an abandoned submission to his will, the last and greatest, recommended by the other two.

So that, whether he should have such a Parliament, or no Parliament, there will be an end of genuine Parliaments. And then—what follows ? Ask him, and he will not tell you : but I will, and all men may guess ; even whatever he pleases, final bondage, and the inquisition ; monks and fraud triumphant, conscience oppressed, the Bible banished, Popery and flames in fashion, and Protestants burned, or their bodies secured at the expense of their faith, and their souls. Here is a catalogue of woes, dreadful ones, yet not all. Behold them, Britons, abhor them, and prevent them.

A Popish government, and a Protestant Parliament, are a contradiction : they are fire and water to each other. A Popish Parliament, in a Protestant country, is equally impossible. Will he declare himself a Protestant ? He dares not. Nor shall we believe him, if he do. The most furious Papists are his keenest emissaries, the most active to poison and prevent Protestants : the grossest Papists, almost savages, are armed for him, and for our destruction.

Are these tokens of his being a Protestant, or inclined to be ? His pretended grandfather long feigned himself a Protestant : his pretended grand uncle carried on the fraud to his death. Both of them continually nurtured Popery, and betrayed the Protestants ; one of them openly attempted their destruction.

We have already a Protestant king, one of our own seeking and approving, never suspected of Popery, or of any fraud, or of any equivocation ; his progeny all Protestants by principle and education : shall we risk a desperate change, because the young pretender talks civilly, and makes promises ? Are not all his actions lawless, most of them barbarous ? And is success likely to mend such a wild lawless adventurer ? He labours to be master by violence. What he gains by violence, he must keep by violence ; and can never be safe, till all men be undone, till *will* determine law, and the sword decide property.

Such is thy threatened fate, O England ! rouse and extirpate the paricides that threaten it. The spirit of the nation hath loudly displayed itself, and gloriously from sea to sea, with noble ardor and disdain, against a wanton intruder, against savage traitors, and a rebellion unprovoked. What remains but to nourish and pursue that glorious spirit ? The alternative is short, to save all, or to lose all, to destroy, or be destroyed.

In my next, I shall illustrate and confirm all that I have here advanced, by an example out of the history of England.

NUMBER 81.

The Norman Invasion, how sanguinary and fatal to England. The Invader how faithless and barbarous to Englishmen.

IN the following extracts from the reign, or rather the usurpation and tyranny of William the Norman, we have a specimen of what may as reasonably be dreaded from the pretender (either old or young) who like the other invader, claims an airy fictitious right, and would assert it by force, against law and religion; and, to enjoy it, would make three kingdoms perjured slaves or victims.

William the Norman, improperly called Conqueror, invaded England at the head of forces, mixed and collected from many countries, most of them needy adventurers, allured by promises of plunder and settlements in this kingdom, which when subdued, was to be turned into spoil, and parted amongst the spoilers, with proper preference and allotment to the principal spoiler. It was an attempt as desperate as wicked; and they might all have probably perished in it, though they were victorious at first, had not the clergy deserted the common cause, and broken their engagement to the nobility and the Londoners, purely to make early court to the usurper, and to gain proper advantages to themselves, whatever became of the rest. The case, I bless God, is different now, and we have a different clergy, who being convinced, that they have a common interest with the laity in the cause of liberty, join cordially with them, and have borne an illustrious testimony against unnatural rebels and barbarous usurpation.

Yet, with all the advantage of this fatal defection, he could never have succeeded, had he not submitted to conditions. He found himself encompassed with so many distresses, and still threatened with so many more, that, to prevent famine, and to divert the continual demands of his followers, he agreed to terms, the more readily, as he intended to keep none. He swore to the English, upon receiving the crown from them, to preserve all their laws and liberties. He added many magnificent promises, which, with his fair behaviour, disposed them frankly to trust him.

His deceit lasted not long, but gave way to his innate appetite for power, and to his devouring avarice. He had another constant stimulation to rob and oppress, from the restless discontents and importunities of his comrades in the usurpation, calling upon him for donatives and gratifications, boldly pleading their many wants and many services, together with his promises and treaty with them. To answer all their demands, and all his own, he had no other resource but to rob the English, and, by perjuring himself to them, be able to keep his faith with his brother robbers; besides, he took tyranny to be his best policy, to disable the oppressed from avenging their oppression.

This is the eternal oversight and false craft of tyrants; as if a people wealthy and well protected, (blessings that naturally disposed them to be content) were more to be feared by their protector, than a people

undered and desperate. The dread of lawless power may reduce the cries of men, perhaps their lips, to acquiesce ; but their spirits will remain the more ulcerated and implacable.

It is plain, that William the Norman came into England a determined enemy to the English. He was in his own nature a tyrant, as most all that aim at conquest are, and engaged by compact to exercise endless tyranny. Yet he swore and promised, and made fair professions ; talked of his pretended title, and kindred to the throne, and referred all his pretensions to the decision of the English, who to be free must act from conviction with Norman swords at their throats.

He was obliged to impoverish the whole nation to gratify those, who upon that condition only, joined with him in invading the nation. His course of reigning was therefore naturally a course of plunder, and cruelty to such as dared to complain of being plundered. Complaint as a proof of disaffection, and the complainers were hanged as traitors. The first tax that he raised was oppressive and arbitrary, and loaded with all the excesses of rigour ; the whole contrary to his oath. The motives for it were equally odious, as it was for money to pay his insatiate spoilers ; a doleful reason to the poor natives. Yet all this was not the worst : He had such contempt for his honour and his oath, as well as for his subjects, that not a farthing of this terrible tax was paid to the Normans, though for them only he avowed to have raised it. He kept the whole to himself, as a fund against the miserable people from whom he had squeezed it ; miserable indeed, thus mocked and drained, yet liable to be again equally drained, upon the same pretence.

Hitherto he had robbed them but in part : He next proceeds to strip them to the skin, upon a charge against them, founded upon downright impudence, namely, their adherence to their late lawful king, Harold the Second, when they had no other to adhere to. Had that brave prince been alive, the English throne would not have been defiled by the rough William, who had no peace whilst the English had any land. No argument will do against a naked sword. He seized a great number of estates, with as little ceremony as mercy.

When by this, and every furious oppression, he had made the miserable nation stark-mad, his next step was to punish them for being so. He, therefore, besides infinite vengeance, corporal and capital, at once seized into his own hands all baronies, and all fiefs of the crown, whatsoever. Thus he reduced all the nobility and landholders in England to nakedness and want of bread. Their misery, which seemed complete, had yet a heavy aggravation, and they had another shocking scene to behold. Their estates were granted to the favourites and champions of the usurper, desperate adventurers, and the needy hunters of fortune.

These upstarts and spoilers were incredibly exalted. Some of them seated in the revenues of whole counties ; many of them counted their manors by hundreds. Others were made lords of cities, others proprietors of great towns ; the rest commanded strong forts and castles, purposely built to ensure the everlasting bondage of the wretched English. All these lofty upstarts had it now in their option, to starve, or to feed, the genuine lords and owners ; I mean, such of them as the cruel mercy of the invader had left to live bereft of dignity and bread.

These new lords, governed by the maxims and spirit of their master, admitting none to hold under them but their own adherents, England was in a direct way to lose its name, which was absurdly derived from any number of slaves and beggars.

This wonderful revolution of ranks and property, so universal and so sudden, as hardly to be matched in any country, under any tyrant, upon any provocation, contracted fresh guilt and horror from the insidious behaviour of the usurper just before. It was unusually soft, and even fatherly. He seemed to affect popularity. He had relaxed the severe exercise of power, recalled exiles, released prisoners; shewn tenderness to the English, and punished the insolent Normans. He had again talked of calling a free Parliament, and even assembled from all parts of the kingdom, such men of note for quality and knowledge as were fittest to acquaint him with the national customs and laws.

This change of behaviour in him cheated the poor English, and recovered the tyrant their hearts. In him it was all a faithless leint, the effect of his present dread from an actual invasion in the north, from Denmark. As soon as he had bribed away that peril, by money to the Danish general, he strait returned to his rage, heightened by this last danger. Besides all the human victims to his fury, he vented it upon buildings and the soil. In the best part of the north, for sixty miles together, he spread desolation so complete, that in all that tract not a tree or shrub was left; not a house or church, nor subsistence for man or beast. He was indeed least merciful to such as he did not forthwith destroy, but left to the pangs of famine, to seek relief from carrion, from the most loathsome insects and vermin, and from the flesh of one another, 'till they at last expired, bereft of that horrible food. The whole region was converted into so absolute a desert, that for many years together the marks of the plough were not seen in it.

When William had as it were extinguished the English nobility and landlords, he extended his savage scheme to the English clergy, despising their privileges, trampling upon their charters, and subjecting them to what burdens he pleased. Where they submitted, he used them like slaves, and half starved them; where they asserted their rights, he treated them like traitors, stripped them of their freeholds, and put Normans in their room. Most of the army too was quartered upon them. He caused all religious houses to be searched, and seized all the wealth in them; for that was what he wanted, though he pretended to look for concealed rebels and traitors. It proved a lucrative search to him, as he spared nothing that was valuable, the rich ornaments of their saints and shrines, their massy plate, nor any of their precious furniture, however consecrated to holy purposes.

With all this outrage upon clergymen, he had no aversion to the clergy. For like many other cruel men, he was a great bigot, full of reverence, and even of liberality to monks. William hated the English clergy because they were Englishmen (just as any Popish tyrant will always hate English Protestants.) His hatred and mistrust of them was so excessive, that by juggling with the Pope (the father and encourager of all mischief and impiety) he procured his consent to deprive all the obnoxious dignitaries at a blow. Some he banished, others he imprisoned, and supplied all the vacancies with strangers, creatures of his own or of the Pope.

Such was the return which he made to the English clergy, for their early submission to him and their treachery to their country. A different spirit, because a different religion, actuates our modern clergy, who oppose the advances of a foreign yoke and foreign superstition, with true English courage and true Protestant zeal.

His whole reign was a series of robbery and cruelty. He was so singularly abhorred, that when a whole army of conspirators was formed to destroy him, not a single conspirator was found to inform him of his danger. He saw it before he heard of it, and had no resource but to offer them their own terms, and implicitly submitted to the meanest. He owned all their reproaches to be just, condemned himself and all his barbarous, faithless tyranny, solemnly promised a thorough reformation, and gave them his soul for a pledge. He took an awful oath, upon the Holy Gospel, and expressly submitted to be damned, if he failed, for the future to rule according to the known laws of England.

Thus he stripped them of their fears, as he did the credulous fools their followers of their weapons; the only avenging devils that he dreaded. The leaders broke their army, against all sense, and he his oath, against all conscience and shame. Nay, his oath did but whet his vengeance. They who had been the witnesses and depositaries of his sacramental engagement, first felt his perjury and revenge, and he pursued the slaughter with profuse barbarity, which was more bitterly felt by such whom he starved in dungeons and exile, than by those whom he only butchered. The massacre was extensive and unrelenting. This was rash rage against true policy. A prince who acts like a destroyer, is in perpetual danger of being destroyed. William had one constant encouragement to the blackest perjury and tyranny, the Pope's warrant and absolution: a consideration worthy of the thoughts and abhorrence of all Englishmen at this day!

His constant perfidy, oppression and cruelty, begot more conspiracies, and these fresh barbarity and carnage. Suspicion was a proof of guilt, and whomsoever he disliked, he suspected; so that having criminals without number, he made victims without mercy. Hanging was the gentlest punishment: to be banished and starved was accounted a favour. Numbers perished in loathsome dungeons: many had their eyes pulled out; many had their feet and hands lopped off, and both sorts were left with the burden of life and carcasses, without organs to guide and support life.

After he had long waded in blood, shed all the best, and thinned the nation, at least of its English inhabitants, he set himself to accumulate money, and spared no oppression, nor device to oppress. It was a course not of taxing and collecting, but of rapine and grinding. He had got a kingdom by robbery and slaughter, and afterwards intensely and eagerly pursued the trade. He came to the kingdom by force and treachery, and he ruled it as he got it. Neither did the consuming tyranny cease with him: his son Rufus was rather worse than he; indeed a wofish tyrant. Several of the same line were as bad. They claimed the kingdom as their property, and a right to it from conquest. It had been much the same thing to the nation, had they claimed it by divine right, only the latter must be owned better calculated for delusion and tyranny, as it carries a more awful sound, and derives itself from

heaven. We know what dreadful conclusions were forged for unlimited servitude, during the arbitrary times when it was in fashion here.

God and his majesty defend us from such times, and from all such as would revive them !

P. S. In this character of William, called the Conqueror, I have taken the facts and circumstances as I have found them in history ; so far am I from inventing either, to serve any purpose of my own. That he is not generally seen in so black a light, I conceive to be owing to the favourable account given of him by Sir William Temple ; a performance unworthy of so able and candid a writer.

NUMBER 82.

The curious Speech of a Fugitive Protestant-Popish-Jacobite Priest to Lewis the Well-beloved.

THE following speech, in French, is handed about in manuscript at Paris, and commended for its smartness and eloquence. His excellency Myubeer Van Hoey has sent a copy of it to the Hague : an important piece of intelligence from such an able hand ! a friend of mine having transmitted a transcript of it to me, I think it well worth the perusal of English readers. In order to be quite exact in my translation of it, I have even preserved some Gallicisms, that none of the pith and scope of so curious a piece might be lost.

Mr. Kelly, the Nonjuror, Secretary to the late Bishop Atterbury, now Envoy from the Young Pretender in Scotland to the King of France, his Speech to that Monarch.

SIRE,

I HAVE the honour to wait upon your majesty from my royal master, the prince Regent, and am fully instructed by him (your ministers, Sire, have seen my instructions) to display to your majesty what a profound and lively sense he fosters in his princely heart, of your generous friendship to himself and his cause ; of your bountiful and seasonable assistance ; and of your cordiality in continuing to assist him ; assistance, Sire, so signal and successful, as to have raised him from a forsaken wanderer, to command an army, to the possession of almost all one kingdom, and to the fair hopes of another.

His R. H. Sire, is so passionately penetrated with a spirit of gratitude towards your majesty, his gracious benefactor and founder, that he ardently longs to publish his gratitude to your majesty before the face of the whole world, by returning you your own gift again, and laying his crown at your feet. A title to it he had before, but, at best, disputed, always ineffectual : your majesty, Sire, in giving him posses-

ion, has, as it were, substantially purchased the title to yourself. His highest ambition will be, to have the honour to wear, for your majesty's use, a crown conferred upon him by your majesty's bounty.

For this pleasing reason, Sire, he earnestly applies to your majesty, to facilitate to him the means of thus signaling his thanks to your majesty. Be pleased, Sire, to enable him to a final triumph ; since he cannot, he will not, triumph finally, but for your majesty.

He has the honour, Sire, to offer other views of advantage to your majesty, from such a happy, such a seasonable revolution in England ; as that vain, ill judging nation, long infatuated with the deceitful and dangerous pride of liberty, and with a damnable antipathy to the true apostolic church, shall then no longer obstruct your majesty's paternal schemes for the glory of your crown, and for the just abasement of such princes and states, as would, for narrow interests and presumptuous ends of their own, dare to dispute your majesty's wise measures for your own honour and their humiliation.

His R. H. Sire, incapable of the low policy of such ungenerous caution and neutrality, will ambitiously seek his own glory in advancing that of your majesty, in humbling all who are so blind as to refuse to receive laws from so great a monarch. In such assistance given to your majesty, Sire, for such laudable and pacific ends, his R. H. besides the reasonableness of paying a just debt, will have the pleasure and merit of imitating the examples of his royal grandfather, and his royal grand uncle (of pious memory) in their behaviour towards your Majesty's great grandfather, Lewis the Great, a glorious champion against schismatics and commonwealths, and against all who stood so obstinately in defence of their own pretended rights, as not to submit them to his godlike power.

His R. H. Sire, hath planned out measures for effectually reducing intractable spirits, when, by your majesty's favour, he is once settled. He likewise hopes and even intreats, your majesty's concurrence in this his noble desing. He the less doubts your aid, Sire, as it is a common cause, almost equally interesting to both your majesty and himself. He purposes to begin with persuasions and gentle methods, and is so moderate as to be content with all his subjects who will embrace the apostolic system of the nonjurors (of whom, Sire, I have the honour to be one) neither can our faith or discipline, though we be Protestants, offend your majesty, since they so intimately square with those of the Gallican church, which we have been ambitious to resemble and imitate, in all her essential tenets and practices, " prayers for the dead ; adoration of the host ; the invocation of saints ; the fire of purgatory ; the power of priests to open the gates of heaven and hell ; the doctrines of Auricular confession, priestly absolution, christm. penance, altars, and the unbloody sacrifice thereon ; but above all, the princely power, and indelible character, with their uninterrupted apostolic succession, of bishops and priests."

We hold too, Sire, the divine hereditary right and irresistible authority of kings. We detest scismatics, and consider the present clergy as intruders, Presbyterians, and time-servers, ever since the revolution ; and we reclaim the church lands from the sacrilegious usurpers of them.

These Catholic principles, Sire, will, we hope, warrant us in the equitable eyes of your majesty, for assuming, as we do, the title of the Catholic church of Great Britain. These Catholic principles, Sire, and our steady loyalty, have so endeared us to his R. H. the P. R. that he professeth to have our restoration at heart, as much as we have his. We burn, Sire, with fervent zeal, to see the churches gloriously filled with a staunch apostolic ministry, confessors, who have a common claim, common sufferings, and a common interest with himself.

He hopes, Sire, that your majesty will graciously please to behold him, with sympathizing eyes, in the same tender and just light as he doth us, engaged, Sire, in a cause in which your majesty has an equal concern with himself; since, as he will rule by you, Sire, he will be ever animated with the same glowing ambition to rule for you, Sire, according to the illustrious precedent set him by his last and best predecessors.

It is thus, Sire, that his R. H. has the pleasing prospect of lessening, in part, that immense heap of obligations, which have been so long and so plentifully showering upon him and his house from the august house of France, particularly by yourself, Sire, the representative and living glory of that imperial house. As to the literal method of discharging those debts, he has the honour to leave it entirely, Sire, to your majesty's wisdom and discretion; determined, as he is, when all is paid, still to consider himself your debtor, and the debt itself as immortal and irredeemable. For your present security, Sire, he offers your majesty his heart and his kingdoms, which are indeed already yours; and he graciously consigns to me, Sire, the glory of making your majesty that offer.

It transports my soul, Sire, and even softens it, as your majesty may be pleased to perceive by these sincere tears, to foresee, as I do, with an unchangeable hope, the blessed time approaching, when your majesty shall have given to England a new face, fixed the true heir upon the throne, and uniformity in the church; when the hierarchy shall no longer be invaded and defiled by schismatics, nor insolent republicans limit and affront the crown; when church and monarchy shall go hand in hand, and give laws without controul, except when honoured with your majesty's enlightening commands, or warned by your wise measures. Both church and state will be the work of your own hands. Condescend, Sire, to enable us to complete your own glorious work. Be, Sire, be, to our three kingdoms what you are so conspicuously to France, Louis the well-beloved.

Your majesty's great wisdom will acquaint you, Sire, that present success depends upon present supplies. The usurped government in England grows every day more formidable, especially at sea, at your majesty's grievous expense, and to our lamentable misfortune. It wounds us, Sire, it wounds us with grief, to see merchants and republicans so boldly seizing the ships and wealth of so great a monarch. Be speedy, Sire, to avenge yourself and us; shorten their saucy triumph and immoderate gains, and give them a rightful governor; a governor of your own, who will cure them of their drunken insolence from wealth, and of their wild wantonness from liberty; teach them, Sire, proper respect for your majesty, with due loyalty and obedience to his R. H. your majesty's grateful ward and faithful ally.

It will doubtless touch your royal heart, Sire, with the most pleasing sensations, to hear the agreeable information which I have the honour to communicate to your majesty, that there is an entire and equitable plan fixed for securing the royal throne, as soon as it is recovered. All who served or favoured the usurpation, are not only never to be trusted, but to be dispatched and forfeited, like the regicides, Sire, at the last restoration. They are however to be treated in the mean time with gentle language, and even to be fed with fair hopes, since it would be premature and imprudent to terrify them into more desperate measures of defence than they are even now taking.

These forfeitures, Sire, and the stocks which have been rather funds of public rebellion, than of the public revenue, will competently exalt and enrich his M———'s court and followers. The present churchmen, who have so long and wilfully lopped themselves off from the apostolic succession, are to be divested of all their usurped emoluments; their ministry will be declared schismatical, and all their ordinations null. Many of the church lands will be resumed, most of them perhaps forfeited, and the rest purchased. Thus, Sire, the church will be brought to flourish with the monarchy, and to crush all sectaries, and all republicans. For at present, alas! none but Presbyterians govern the church; none but republicans administer the monarchy.

Permit me, Sire, to acquaint your majesty with one successful stroke of our policy, which hath done us marvellous service. We have convinced all our adherents, that the present complying churchmen, bishops and clergy, are Presbyterians; and that Presbyterians are much worse Christians than Papists, a nickname which schismatics give to Catholics. In this step, Sire, we do but confirm our esteem and charity for the Gallican church, with which we have long studied to unite our own, and even agreed to a scheme for that purpose; a scheme which Mr. Lesly, a celebrated champion of ours, had the honest boldness to present to an English convocation in the reign of queen Anne.

We have, Sire, many writers, and many books ready written, to prove all our claims, as soon as we can master the kingdom, and the press; passive obedience, and indefeasible right shall be again our constant, and our affectionate themes, loudly and awfully echoed by every divine from every pulpit; doctrines, Sire, ever dear to his R. H.'s best predecessors, and tenderly nourished by them. We shall produce, Sire, voluminous histories (purposely composed) to prove the succession of the Stuarts from the ancient monarchical house of Noah, and that the said succession was never interrupted, whatever breaches time and violence, necessity and accidents, may have made in it. An egregious performance this, Sire, worthy the countenance of all rightful kings, and of all offended patriots who oppose kings whom they cannot approve.

It is the firm purpose of his R. H. (for to him his royal father, your majesty knows, will resign) it is, Sire, his fixed resolution, to revive, and even to sharpen the old laws, and to reign with vigour, like an absolute master, at least by the direction of the greatest of all. For it will be, Sire, his study and his pride, always to reign according to your model, and by your sage counsel; and to shew himself worthy of such a revered, such a superior pattern and director.

Such, Sire, are the sentiments, views, hopes, and situation of his R. H. the P. R. heaven and your majesty have rendered him hitherto victorious. He hopes that the greatest king upon earth will concur with the king of heaven, in accomplishing a work so favoured and forwarded by both.

I shall impatiently wait, Sire, for the honour of your majesty's commands, and still more impatiently for the execution of them from your majesty's ministers.

NUMBER 83.

The Loyalty of Papists never to be trusted by Protestants. Religion and Liberty inevitable Sacrifices to a Popish Revolution.

In the latter end of the year 1639, in the Irish Parliament, the Irish Popish members, who were many, were extremely forward to shew themselves well affected and zealous subjects, and concurred unanimously in a vote for four subsidies to the king. In the middle of the year 1641, the Irish rebel against the king, they massacre all his Protestant subjects, and are led and animated in all their brutal outrages, by these very Papish members, lately so complaisant, so loyal, and so zealous for the king, now defying his authority, overturning the government, and butchering his only true subjects.

It is remarkable enough, that so able a man as the earl of Strafford (he was then only lord Wentworth, and lord deputy, but was afterwards earl of Strafford, the name which he is chiefly known by) then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, had, but the year before, in all his dispatches from thence flourished, in high strains, upon the loyalty and affection of the native Irish: he even upbraids the Scots, then forced by oppression into arms, with the exemplary and peaceable behaviour of the Irish.

This representation that great man partly meant as a compliment upon his own management, and probably, found it well pleasing at court, where Popery was too much in fashion, and the Irish too much caressed for being Papists, especially by the queen, who governed the spirit of the king. He, too, though a Protestant, was partial to Popery as a religion favourable to high monarchy, such as, it cannot be denied, he was fond of. Yet the discerning Lord Lieutenant is so candid as to warn the king against employing the earl of Antrim to quell the troubles in Scotland, as the king was inclined he should; for this Popish earl was then in great favour with the king, and even with archbishop Laud. "I neither hope much (says the sagacious Wentworth) from his parts, nor from his power, nor from his affections.—As he is a Papist, and grandson to that famous rebel, the earl of Tyrone, he is not to be trusted with any store of arms which he is now applying for."

In another letter to the king, about raising forces in Ireland against Scotland, "He beseeches his majesty, not to grant the earl of Antrim

a thoop (which he would surely be a suitor for) as a thing which would prove very unpopular to all the English, from his religion, his race, his unfitness for trust, his interested views, his evil and traitorous designs, &c." Besides, lord Strafford, in all his letters, treats him as a very weak, vain man.

After all this weighty warning, the king is still favourable to this Popish earl, talks of his free and noble spirit, at that conjuncture, and recommends him to the Lord Lieutenant, as worthy to be trusted and employed. His majesty, soon after, in a letter to Strafford, tells him, "I should be glad you could find some way to furnish the earl of Antrim with arms, though he be a Roman Catholic; for he may be of use to me at this time, to let loose upon the earl of Argyle."

Antrim, thus encouraged, applied for six thousand arms, and even purposed to put the forces he raised under the command of his cousin O Neal. "I am astonished says lord Strafford, with his lordship's purpose, colonel O Neal, understood to be in his heart and affections a traitor! What a prospect for all us English here, to see six thousand men (Irish Papists) armed with our own weapons (ourselves by that means turned naked) men led by Tyrone's grandchild, the son of old Randal Mac Donald, in the same country, formerly the very heart and strength of those mighty, long, lasting rebellions?"

But though the Lord Lieutenant had excellently exposed the danger of arming Lord Antrim, the misled king orders him to give the earl all possible assistance, and even to give him a commission under the great seal, to levy forces. An army of Irish Papists were accordingly raised, and officered by a savage list of frighted names, Macs and O's all of rebellious race; all, two years after, bloody butchers in the Irish rebellion, and, even now, all ready to begin it, with a commission from his majesty, turned against himself, as well as against his subjects. At best the earl of Antrim did no service to the king; he had other aims, though he had not capacity, nor, just then, an opportunity, to pursue them. He took the first opportunity, and most barbarously improved it; yet, after the restoration, he pleaded king Charles the First's commission for all he did, and actually got a pardon from king Charles the Second, I think, upon that plea.

One thing is extremely remarkable: it appears to be the opinion of Lord Strafford, that before the earl of Argyle declared himself, and took the covenant, his country was given away by the king to the earl of Antrim and others.

If king Charles the First, so true a Protestant, was thus perniciously misled and betrayed by Papists; what wonder that Charles the Second, a real Papist, the more dangerous and guilty as he was a pretended Protestant, a prince of such loose principles, and a libertine in life, was as fond of Popery as he was of arbitrary power, a known foe to law and virtue, and Protestants; a known dissembler, partial to Papists, their constant friend and dupe? He was in all their measures hearty; though he was too lazy and timid, and too much devoted to voluptuousness, to risk his ease and pleasures, and crown, by openly declaring for the Pope, and introducing Popish superstition barefaced, both so odious to the English.

His brother, whose zeal, like his blindness, was extreme, tried the mad experiment, and madly perished in the trial. He was baffled and

deposed ; and surely it was worse than death, to fall from a throne, to live upon alms from the enemy of the English name.

His pretended son is a saturnine bigot, full of the dreams of his divine right, which implies blind slavery in his subjects : he is drunk with hell vengeance against them for the damnable crimes of sacrilege and rebellion, in renouncing him and his oracle and prompter, the Pope. What hope can be conceived of his offspring ? Neither he nor they dare, if they would, abjure the Pope or arbitrary power. Without the Pope they may want bread, and hereditary right implies a right to be arbitrary. The blood they pretend to is but a discouraging recommendation, yet they have no other.

It must appear gross mockery, mockery even to barbarous Highlanders, to employ such bloody savages, to rob the property and to confine and murder the persons of men, under the crazy pretence of restoring liberty. The great grievance is, that liberty is too fixed and flourishing ; that it tramples upon superstition and tyranny, and must be pulled down before these can be set up.

By what law does the invader pretend to come in, but that he has right against law, and to destroy law ? His intrusion, by all the steps of violence and blood, infers that no violence can disqualify him, nor could disqualify his pretended father ; that therefore he hath, and his pretended father had, a right to rule by violence, and that no man in the three nations, nor the three nations themselves, have any right to oppose violence. Concise reasoning ! “ All that is in them, all the lives, all the property in them, are mine by right, and I will take it by force.”

His auxiliaries from abroad are as shocking as his claims at home, the power of France, the curses and demands of the Pope. France pants for our destruction, and knows that the sure way to destroy us, is to enslave us ; to render us forlorn and even double slaves at once to French and Papal tyranny ; nay, slaves at second hand to a king of straw, a royal shadow, set up by Rome and the house of Bourbon. What dare he refuse to his masters and creators ? His own bigotry, his hatred of Protestants, his dread of liberty, and the merit of extirpating heresy, will all excite him to execute his deputation with zeal. Religion, liberty, trade, all odious to his masters and to himself, must fall sudden sacrifices to their joint policy and zeal.

What think you, Englishmen, Protestants, and freemen, of the shocking scene ? For all this is no more than the necessary effects and natural operations of Popery and tyranny. Gratian, the famous canonist, the great oracle of the Vatican, maintains, “ That a Christian city (or community) may be totally and lawfully burned for a few heretics dwelling in it.” This decision, so positive and bloody, is but agreeable to the universal spirit and practice of Popery. Nor can there be such a thorough renouncing of Christ by the strongest words of apostacy, as the butchering of men and Christians in his name, and blasphemously urging his authority.

If the heresy of a few draws down and warrants this fiery doom upon a community, What hath a whole nation of heretics to expect ? What indeed, but incessant fires, and furnaces seven times heated ?

Take warning, O Britons ! When your government is gone, your liberty is gone, and your religion must follow. Foreign politics, and in-

defensible right, will, must, soon swallow your dear liberty, and all your fortunes. Papal zeal, for ever burning and bloody, must, will, furiously extinguish your religion, and burn your persons and Bibles. Remember queen Mary : Remember the French and Irish massacres : Remember the Spanish inquisition, with the unrelenting racks and flames there : Remember the swift and inhuman destruction everywhere brought upon Protestants by Popery ; and may God give you understanding in all things !

NUMBER 84.

Remarks upon the Appeal of the Pretender (young or old) to the People.

By the style of the pretender's declaration he seems to rely, for his principal support, upon the stupidity and insatiation of the nation. He says, " his only intention is, to reinstate his subjects in the full enjoyment of their religion, laws and liberties." When we are in the most copious possession of all these blessings, even to profusion and satiety, beyond all the nations of the earth, he comes from Rome, where religion is founded in fraud, rapine and cruelty, to reinstate us Protestants in the full enjoyment of our religion, which is accursed by Rome, and we are damned by Rome for holding it.

Just so Queen Mary reinstated her subjects in the full enjoyment of their religion, by setting up the Papists to burn the Protestants, and pursued this motherly goodness and protection of them in all their rights, to the end of her detestable life. She promised as fair as he does, promised the very same things, and professed the same public spirit.

What reason can we have to believe that he will not follow her Catholic examples, educated, as he is, in the same Catholic principles, which eternally infer the same Catholic spirit ? Before we can take his word, he must shew us, what he never can shew, that ever a Popish prince kept his engagements to Protestant subjects, or that the genius of Popery, and the maxims of the Pope, will suffer him to keep them ? Did his pretended father keep them ? He does not pretend to say that he did ; he cannot pretend to say it. He knows that he did not ; yet does not condemn, nor even censure him, for not doing it, nor for breaking all his solemn oaths, and invading all our rights.

What therefore does he mean by his intention " to reinstate his subjects in the enjoyment of all their rights ?" I doubt he hath a double meaning ; first to mislead, if he can, such as already enjoy all their rights ; when at the same time he intends, as his education and religion direct him, to spoil them of all. He would draw them the while to think that they are wronged of their right, and he comes to restore them. Thus he gives weak minds hopes, in order to bring them to give him admittance ; and then, when they have made him master, he will teach

them what their rights are ; namely, to be redeemed from heresy, and be forced, for their good, into the bosom of the Catholic church ; to be ruled by an hereditary, indefeasible sovereign, will recall them from the guilt of rebellion, and rule them by the salutary laws of absolute monarchy. Liberty as it is now understood and practised, can be none of their rights, as by it his father was dethroned, and himself stands excluded.

He therefore cannot mean English Protestant liberty : If he did, his declaration would be ridiculous ; for what people upon earth have as much liberty as we ? His present attempt would, for the same reason, be a contradiction ; since, whilst we enjoy our present liberty, he can never reign. As little can he mean the present Protestant religion, which excluded his father for ever, and him from ever succeeding his father.

This language and these promises are therefore mere mockery to all men of sense, and sugar plums to children and fools. It is equally absurd and deceitful to call us his subjects : He is an exile by law, and can have no subjects. We are not, we scorn to be his subjects. By calling us his subjects he disowns the law ; yet, mocking sovereignty, and deriding us, he offers us a gracious impossibility, of reinstating us in what we never wanted ; what we enjoy above all men, our religion, laws and liberties.

Is not this pleasant ? His father ran headlong to destroy all these, the moment after he had sworn to preserve them all : King William restored them : King George has enlarged them, and steadily preserves them. In what sense are they to be reinstated, but by being re-destroyed ? As he is the visionary representative of all his subjects, by reinstating himself he concludes that we shall all be reinstated.—for we are all his.

Neither are such extravagant doctrines and demands unlike those preached up by the court sycophants in his father's time, and too long before. It would be endless to cite quotations and sermons, and the abuses then put upon God's word, on this subject, by men profanely calling themselves religious, and prostituting the name of Protestants to Popish purposes. One illustration shall suffice here out of thousands. Doctor Ball, master of the temple, taking for his text the words of our blessed Saviour, " Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's," desired his audience to observe, that the words were *RENDER unto Cæsar*, not *GIVE unto Cæsar* ; for all was Cæsars before. The courtly doctor goes on to shew all men, that no man had a right to any thing ; that whatever men had was Cæsar's, and Cæsar had a right to *all* things.

I need hardly add, that by Cæsar the doctor meant king James, or king Charles (I forget which) princes not very Cæsorean, but greedy of all the rights which doctor Ball conferred upon Cæsar ; nor had he any other reason for so conferring them. Had it been necessary to have derived these princes from the blood of Cæsar, 'tis not improbable that the courteous divine would have invented a lineal descent from him, found a text for it, and branded as atheists all who disputed it.

I cannot but here remark, with concern, that the divines of those days, even some able divines, whilst they contend against the frauds and horrors of Popery with irresistible force and success, yet with strange inconsistency and strange zeal, maintained the wild tenets of indefeasible right, and blind bondage to the will of a tyrant ; even of a Popish tyrant. It is one of the many and mighty blessings attending

the revolution and Protestant succession, that our divines breathe a different spirit, and contend, like good Englishmen, for civil liberty, and like good Christians, for liberty of conscience,—doctrines odious and decried in former reigns.

The pretender, therefore, by religion, laws, and liberties, means such as his pretended father, king James, pleased to allow his subjects; for he strove to extinguish all the laws of religion and liberty, which they claimed to themselves. By these laws and liberties, therefore, he cannot intend, and therefore we cannot understand him to intend ours. His words are manifest cant, the cant of all invaders. Who that invades a country, would not flatter it to obtain it? There is not a tyrant in Europe but pretends to allow his slaves great rights and privileges, and professes how tenderly he will maintain them in such. Old Louis, in every step he took, and in every edict he published, purposely to destroy the edict of Nantz, (and he was continually, by all steps and edicts, pushing that perfidious design) was careful constantly to declare, "That he would never violate the edict of Nantz," which he still faithfully stiled the perpetual, the irrevocable edict.

The only literal meaning which the pretender's words will bear, is the meaning which he will not publicly own, nor like to have it discovered. "To reinstate all his subjects in the enjoyment of their religion, laws and liberties," is a very proper declaration and encouragement to most of those who own him for their sovereign; to all bigotted Papists and hot-headed nonjurors; to desperate out-laws, starving exiles, savage highlanders, and Irish rapparees; to all who claim estates, forfeited by their own, or their father's treason; and to all traitors who gasp for the estates and properties of all real and true subjects, who incur the treason of opposing them.

To all that hungry host such a promise is a delicious bait; a redemption from misery; a call to happiness; an invitation to take possession of the promised land, with all its wealth and milk and honey. But it is a terrible denunciation of woe to us, the present possessors, to be stripped and extirpated, destroyed or expelled, like the accursed Philistines: For, as God gave Canaan to the Jews, the Pope can give England to the Catholics; just as he did half the globe to the Spaniards, who have rendered it, by every effort of savage cruelty and devouring tyranny, almost as waste as when God first created it.

By the same rule of just construction we find what he means by removing the encroachments made upon a free people. These encroachments are the revolution, the Protestant succession, the disestablishment of Popery, the restraints upon Papists, the settlement of heresy, the exclusion of Catholic princes, and our resistance of Catholic tyranny.

These are encroachments and grievances with a witness, terrible grievances to the Pope; terrible encroachments upon the Pope's pupil. Can he come, encouraged by the Pope, to mend the condition of Protestants? For, by the Pope's encouragement he comes, armed with the Pope's blessing upon his Popish endeavours, and with the Pope's curse against Protestants. Can he come by the aid of France and Spain, to increase the happiness and strength, and to improve the liberties of Englishmen? For, by the aid of these Catholic powers, he comes armed against England.

His promises therefore, in any other style, are derision.—His ar-

gument from success, is a most rash and profane argument, most apt to wicked purposes, and to colour wicked courses : the blackest criminals have at all times urged it, as often as they have been successful. By the same argument, Providence hath been much longer against him and his family than for them : they have been fifty-seven years in exile, and he hath had a mock reign of a few months over others in arms. We who oppose him, can more justly urge his own best argument against him ; we act under the gospel and the law, in conformity to both, and have the best claim to favour from Providence. We therefore faithfully trust to Providence, and own ourselves indebted to it for the revolution and Protestant succession, as we hope soon to be for his utter defeat and final expulsion. Why such a defeat hath not happened sooner, all men lament, and most men foresaw.

If he reason consistently, he must confess, that Providence hath forsaken him, and forced him to fly from the same ancient capital. How he got thither we all know, and he ought with compunction to reflect. It was by the treachery of parricides in authority, men always gently used, faithfully protected, and even favoured by the government.

He made war upon his majesty, and his majesty's best subjects, by the aid of the worst. He did it by surprise, at the head of barons and rebels unprovoked, all of them mercifully used ; many of them pardoned for former treasons ; many of them trusted ; some of them preferred by his majesty, ungratefully and unnaturally turning his own arms against him ; unfurnished with any plea from oppression, any persecution for conscience, any encroachment upon the laws, any alarm from arbitrary power ; under the most legal, the gentlest administration ; in full possession of liberty, surfeited with it, unworthy of it, and wanting in it.

Such is the mad, the unhallowed spirit and character of this rebellion, and such glory does it reflect upon the revolution, which was only an effort and scheme of self-defence, or rather, of self-preservation, against a crazy tyrant's defying oaths, rending piecemeal the laws of God and man, and making war upon law and conscience, and human society.

Equally unfortunate is he in his attack upon the government, from the faults found with it. The mildest government is always the most boldly blamed ; fulness of liberty is constantly exposed to the abuse of liberty ; like health and wealth, and all other worldly blessings : ambition and discontent will readily find grievances, or as readily make them. Nay, the necessary defence of society is a grievance to those who want to distress society, or even to alter it for ends of their own. Places and employments, which are inseparable from society, as without them it cannot be governed, are grievances to such who want them and cannot get them ; and the possession of them is the surest cure for railing at them. The abuse of Parliaments comes with an evil and ill judged grace from his pen, and is a preposterous grievance out of his mouth. King James hectoring and defied Parliaments, would have extinguished Parliaments, and set up his weak will, that is, Popery and tyranny, in the room of law, of gospel, and of Parliaments. The excellency of our laws is a proof of the excellency of our Parliaments, and a glorious defence of them ; neither can they have higher praise, than that the pretender and other Papists dislike them.

Penal laws are the stale common place of all disaffected men, and the eternal subject of their invectives, because they set bounds to their fury. It is natural for rebels to rail at the laws that hamper and hang them. I wonder that the Pretender's manifesto should venture to mention penal laws, when before the revolution almost every penal law was wrested into a capital law. Even the defence of law was made capital; and so worthy an Englishman, and so great a man as Algernon Sidney, was arraigned for libelling; for, so that excellent book of his in defence of liberty against tyranny, since printed and read with applause, was then called; and that true patriot was executed for publishing it, though it never went out of his closet, nor was proved to be his hand writing. Harmless words and conversation became the objects of penal laws, which were virulently stretched to make public martyrs. I doubt it is the greatest misfortune of this government, that penal laws have been so little exerted; we see the numbers and boldness of Papists: pray God we may not feel it.

He talks idly and loosely about former miscarriages under king James, and the outcries against them. He calls outrages and tyranny miscarriages; the invasion and suspension of the laws; the High-Commission, an inquisition set up to destroy this Protestant church; the exacting of money from the subjects, without law, and against law; the imprisonment of the bishops of the church, a third of the bench at once, for their modest petition to be relieved from crying oppression; an army maintained against Parliament and people; many of the officers Papists, commissioned against law; many of them Irish Papists, the butchers of Protestants in '41! or sprung from such butchers, and still raging with the same spirit of butchery; cities and boroughs robbed of their charters, their dear birthright! Parliaments extinguished; Protestants displaced and oppressed; some burned, many banished; Popish priests governing public councils; Popery itself advancing with dreadful strides, already possessed of the throne, and just invading the church; barefaced tyranny set up; Jefferies, and the other instruments of tyranny, wantoning in oppression, sporting with the lives and fortunes of men, and wading in blood. All these frightful and consuming woes; all this train of horrors, he calls miscarriages; neither does he call them by this gentle name explicitly, but only for argument sake, supposes them, and boldly adds, that "They have been more than atoned for by an exile of his family during fifty-seven years."

This may pass for reasoning amongst banditti; ruffians, desperate partizans, and the enthusiasts of party; amongst savage Papists attending him from ignorance, bogs and mountains; but it is an insult upon common sense; the more so, because he does not once blame King James for having committed such a group of tyrannical excesses: So far is he from declaring that he is sorry for them, ashamed of them, and that they shall never be repeated; though had he so declared, we should not have so believed. His religion permits him to promise fair, but damns him if he keeps his promises.

By this odd language and as odd silence, we may clearly see what he intends, and what we may certainly expect, even to see all reversed that was done at and since the revolution, and all revived that was done before. What that was I have just shewed, and could still shew more tragically, had I time to retail here all the doings of James II.

whose whole history is but one continued strain of perfidy, perjury, bigotry and tyranny ; a little heart full of great ambition ; a weak head ; and neither head nor heart in his own keeping.

It seems we have had an unlawful government ever since the revolution. Unhappily for him, this his complaint hurts him bitterly. It is certain, that we have enjoyed more felicity and liberty, since the revolution, than this nation ever knew since it was a nation. It is certain, that tyranny was never carried to such a height as before the revolution under his pretended father.

Here is a choice offered us, to continue what we are, happy and free ; or, to relapse into the servitude and yoke put upon the necks of our forefathers by his father. We have a hopeful specimen, from his son's behaviour in Scotland, what we may assuredly hope for in England. There he rules by wanton will, by sword and target, chiefly by the aid and counsels of mountaineers, who neither obey law, nor can read it. These are his measures of government, for which he has full powers from his father at Rome. Whilst he is openly trampling upon all laws, and all that free Parliaments have done, and is acting what every Parliament must abhor, he mocks us with an appeal to a free Parliament : so acted and so talked king James, but would never stand the trial. His whole trust was in an Irish army, as that of his son is in one like it.

The argument from Providence, taken from his success, is equally ridiculous. Hath Providence led him to victory, and the ancient capital of Scotland ? Then Providence justifies lawless invasion and outrages, and the violence of the sword against the sacred sanction of laws.

With the same inconsistency and importance, he talks of the miserable situation of the kingdom at home and abroad. Who hath contributed so highly as himself to make it miserable ? Before he embroiled us, we rioted in ease and plenty ; this galled his great patron, who therefore sent him to reduce free Britons to the condition of his own subjects, who are hungry slaves ; nor is there so sure a way to exalt France, as to sink and enslave Britain. Without this design we should not have had this visit. It is the interest of France, and therefore the business of France, to undo us. This is the use she means to make of the pretender ; it is the use which she made of king Charles and king James ; who, from powerful independent sovereigns, demeaned themselves to be the deputies and coadjutors of the French king, to enthrall Europe : a task never to be effected till they had enthralled their people. They became the instruments and confederates of France against their own subjects. Thence arises the zeal of France to establish, or, if you will, to reinstate the pretender, as of a race propitious to France : thence her hatred to king William, to king George, and to liberty ; and thence her partiality and succours to the pretender. If France apprehended any good from England, France, far from helping him, would help England against him.

This is at present, the persuasion of every true Englishman, and justly fills them all with their present universal hostile hatred to France ; and to the pretender, as the implement of France. The same persuasion endears to them, with seasonable and unexampled affection, their

own excellent and matchless constitution, and their own brave and excellent king George : God bless and prosper him, and blast the devices of his enemies !

NUMBER 85.

Popery tried by Christianity and Reason, and proved an Enemy to both.

WHATEVER tends to the general good of men, will easily be believed to come from God. Whatever only promotes the interest of particular men, especially if it be burdensome and injurious to the rest of men, is only the contrivance of particular men, and can never come from God, who made all men, and is "no respecter of persons." To say, that he countenances any narrow selfish craft, to cheat and plunder, and oppress all for the sake of a few, or of many, is not only to belie, but to blaspheme him ; as, if the all-wise Creator of men, and preserver of heaven and earth, could descend to low confederates and imposture, the more detestable and impious, for profanely usurping the name of piety.

I shall not here enter into a display of the infinite machinery of Popery, obviously framed to cheat and engross the world, to mock God, and to rob and abuse men. I shall at present inquire a little into the notions of charity entertained by the Romish church.

If she want that great characteristical grace, she wants Christianity. Alms and partiality to those of her own fraternity, are only flattery for flattery, the wages of credulity and bondage, all to keep her dupes in good humour, at the expense of truth and their eye-sight.

The genuine trial of charity is, to apply it to people of a different persuasion. If it shew mercy and tenderness, and good will, there ; and hope the salvation of their souls, though it condemn their opinions ; it is genuine, it is Christian charity. But where it hates, and damns, and persecutes all others ; it renounces Christianity, and bears the blackest mark of imposture ; at best, of fanaticism.

It is a preposterous notion of God, who formed us all, to conceive, that he is addicted to modes, and guided by names and caprice ; and that he hates, and will damn, any human soul for striving to please him the best way it can ; much less for disliking any worship, which, however followed and magnified, seems more likely to offend and contradict, than to please the Almighty God, if it be no where commanded in his word, but rather clearly forbidden there. How can a man, who has read the second commandment, bow to an image, much less pray to it ? He who contradicts this divine command, is a daring impostor, a revolter from God, and a tyrant to men. His guilt and tyranny are still greater, if he curse or punish any man for obeying God, rather than men. By it he avows himself an Idolater, a champion for idolatry,

an apostate from God, and an implacable foe to all who worship God in spirit and in truth.

If an uncharitable sentence could be warranted in any Christian, it would surely be warranted against such, who contradict the most explicit, the most positive laws of God ; and at the same time pretend to be his only followers and favourites ; and therefore deny his mercy and salvation to all human race besides. If ever persecution can be justified, it is so, when it is inflicted upon persecutors. Do not they, who are armed to destroy all, invite destruction from all ? Are they, who want all charity, and shew no mercy, intitled to mercy or charity ? Whoever follows reason, and the Bible, is an object of horror and vengeance to Papists, who lock up the Scriptures, and banish the use of reason : Popery damns all who adhere to either, burns all that it damns, and thus exposes itself to be used by others, as it always uses others.

The plea, that they only are in the right, and all others in the wrong, is the stale plea of all persecutors and fanatics, from the Pope down to Muggleton ; and may be turned by every one upon every one. Muggleton was as free of his damnation to all who would not believe implicitly in him, as his holiness could be ; he even endowed his wife Mary with the power of damning. And doubtless the sentence of that cursing pair would have proved equally tragical with that of the Pope, had their means been equal.

All these profane cursers, whether they act from craziness or craft, set up at once for omnipotence, and indeed for all the attributes of God, in attempting to do what God never did, by fixing all the endless roamings of the human soul, and obliging all men to reason and to dream alike, with faculties infinitely unlike. What two men upon earth had ever exactly the same person, features, sensations, and perceptions ? Are not the speculations of men still more various, infinitely more wandering and unfixed ? And what can be more frantic, than to blame men for differing, when nature itself, and consequently necessity, hath made them to differ ? To curse men for so differing, is profane ; to torture and burn them for it, is diabolical.

Persecutors therefore, having renounced Christianity and reason, ought to be renounced by both. Persecution is destructive of human society. Men eternally differing in notions one from another, must, when thus animated, for ever be destroying one another : and, to drive all such difference out of the world, there must be but one man left in it. This is the only, and the last, certain expedient. So that persecution infers the extirpation of men, as well as of religion and reason ; at least, unless all men surrender themselves implicitly to hypocrisy, and to eternal vassalage.

Such are the genius, such the principles, and such the everlasting practices of Popery. Papists are bound in conscience to destroy us Protestants. He is no Catholic who will not destroy heresy, and consequently heretics ; and he, who is not a Catholic, is, according to Catholic charity, surely damned.

Could the wit of man, could the malice of Judas, or of Satan, frame a more shocking system, a more dreadful conspiracy against human reason, human society, human peace, religion, and the lives of men !

Such a shocking system, such a dreadful conspiracy, is Popery, yet Papists call themselves the only Christians. To profess the name of Christ, to believe in him, to imitate him, and to die for him, is all nothing, without being a Papist ; nay, you are damned for all this, unless you are a Papist ; damned in the next world, and burned in this. Had Popery been contrived by the bitterest, and most sanguinary enemies of Popery, it could not have been contrived more shocking and incredible, than it really is.

Yet this dreadful picture, this devilish spirit of Popery, are so far from provoking its votaries to abhor it, much less to forsake it, that the more dreadful it is, the more they reverence it ; they awfully admire, nay, adore, its highest extravagancies, which therefore hold them still the faster. Their Priests are masters of their senses. Who, that believes his senses, can believe what contradicts them all, believe an impossibility, transubstantiation ? Their priests govern them by their fears. Their priests can damn or save them ; at best they cannot be saved without their priests. Dare they after this contradict their priests.

NUMBER 86.

Warning to Britons, upon the present Rebellion supported by France.

A FRENCH invasion implies a French conquest ; conquest implies servitude. He must be fit for Bedlam who dreams that France can mean any thing but our desolation and ruin by endeavouring to force a king upon us, or that they even mean that he shall be king, whatever mock royalty they nominally give him. It is their own interest and dominion only that they seek, to master and crush us for beating and disappointing them : they know that they can never flourish and domineer till they have impoverished and oppressed us : and none but an absolute creature of theirs, one pliable into every form and impression, obsequious to their dictates, and supple to their will, can serve them by domineering over us.

If they found such complaisance from king Charles II. without any claim to the merit of restoring him : If that prince shewed so little gratitude to the English nation, for their zeal and generosity in recalling him, as to sacrifice, as he did during his whole reign, so loyal a people to the unjust views and pernicious ambition of France, and but secured a Protestant the better to betray his Protestant subjects. If king James II. blindly and ungratefully followed the same course, and whilst he had the awkward ambition of aiming at absolute power here, yet was meanly subservient to the dictates and grandeur of France, still more meanly owning the sovereignty of the Pope ; though neither France nor the Pope had any share in giving him his crown. If both

these princes, only for the sake of making their weak and depraved will a law to their good Protestant subjects, truckled to the will and craft of France and Rome, what is to be expected from one who has no support but theirs, no principles but those of Popery and tyranny ; or, if he had other and better principles, dares not maintain them, though he may be allowed to profess them, and practise guile the better to serve the purposes of these his protectors, and his own purposes ?

A ruler imposed upon a country may claim right, but will rule by force where his right is not owned. They who help him to rule will rule for him, and be his masters, though he bear the name. Neither he nor they will trust a people whom they have once forced. He will not be suffered to trust them if he would. For then he ceases to be independent of those who imposed him. Whoever call in question his right, will pay for their sauciness with their lives. The laws that oppose it will be treason. The acts of violence that support it will be called laws, and the sword will direct, as well as execute the process. Hungry harpies will be craving after prey ; vengeance will be hunting for victims ; to gorge both sorts, the rich and the guiltless must perish. Wherever there is property there will be guilt : all men will be exposed to suffer, the best most : suffering will be followed with complaint, complaints with punishment. Wise men will excite jealousy : great men will be the objects of fear : and as discontents will be constantly and plentifully furnished, fresh terrors to extinguish them will continually be increased, and continually be renewing such discontents.

Here is a dreadful series and intercourse of enmity, where one side only is armed, and void of mercy ; as the other is of help and hope. Title, quality, fortune, will be obnoxious and marked ; every virtue will become a snare, and whatever furnished out the ease and ornament of life, will become a call for taking life away. The industry of years, the acquisition of ages, the fruits of a thousand cares, will be swept away in a moment, all to reward the guilty authors of such horrible iniquity and combustion. Such will be the penalty exacted for the guilt of fortune and merit ; such the price imposed upon public ruin ; a price always paying, but never finally paid till all is paid. The course of law, and even of nature, will be inverted, nobility demeaned ; meanness exalted ; worth punished ; guilt rewarded : whatever was once law will be treason ; whatever was once treason will be law.

Thus tragical and perishing must be the state of England. What must be the state abroad, but that all Europe must follow the general servitude begun here ; and thus deprived of its chief protection and resource, sorrowfully bear the yoke of a restless nation, eager to put chains on all others, though they bear the heaviest themselves ?

They had never accomplished the grand design, without the help of the two royal brothers, the English monarchs above mentioned. For, though France made them not, she moulded and managed them. Far from attending to the call of national interest and honour, and asserting the glory of the English diadem, by preserving the balance, and checking the encroachments of France ; the two royal brothers encouraged all her encroachments upon all her neighbours, upon the empire, upon Spain, and upon the Dutch, our more intimate neighbours and fellow Protestants ; nay, assisted to exteminate the whole Dutch nation, in or-

der to make England a more contiguous member of the French monarchy, to which the English monarchs were become mean pensioners and auxiliaries, with the preposterous pride of aiming themselves at absolute power over free subjects, who were too proud to be slaves, especially second-hand slaves to France.

The monarchs of England descended to be the unnatural instrument of exalting France, and were the authors of all the expense, answerable for all the dreadful wars in Europe ever since. A frown from a king of Great Britain would have made the grand monarch a very harmless neighbour. Would Edward III. would Henry V. nay, would Oliver Cromwell, in king Charles's place, have suffered him to spoil his weakest neighbours, or once to have displayed the Flower-de-luce upon the Rhine or Moselle? Oliver kept him in constant awe; though, for his own ends, such was the unhappy situation of an usurper, he allowed him too much line. The two brothers lacquied to him as their superior, took his hire, and, as it were, wore his livery, and encouraged him in all his perfidious, in all his barbarous invasions.

It was this, this infamous acquiescence and venality from hence, that made him the terror, the oppressor of Europe, and raised his vanity, and his power with it so high, that it required a William III. and a duke of Marlborough, to tame him and take him down. That these two great geniuses in state and war did not thoroughly humble him, was owing to the devilish spirit of party, which generally destroys a country by a pretence of saving it.

France knows that in order to enslave Europe she must begin with Great Britain. Great Britain ought to know, all wise men in it do know, that England has nothing but chains and misery to hope from the policy and friendship of France. This is a dreadful prospect to Britons and Protestants, and the only one, if she succeed. Ought it not to be the first and last resolution of Englishmen and Protestants, that she shall not? What indignation must they not naturally feel against the perfidious, the insolent, and sanguinary efforts of France, and against all who impiously take part with France? Her partizans here, if there be any such, must be the most unnatural of all parricides: a glorious spirit appears amongst all classes of men, in spite of all the late pains taken, all the traiterous misrepresentations used to prevent it, to damp it, and to turn the resentment of Englishmen upon the guardians of England, without sparing the highest.

The last revolution was a manifest deliverance from Popery and tyranny. This would be as manifest a delivery into both. King James deposed himself: he would abolish Parliaments, he would establish Popery; his will was to be a law to his subjects; their consciences must submit to his bigotry. These were grievances indeed, not made, nor to be aggravated, but felt. No wonder he at once lost lords and commons, army, clergy and people. He had incited and even warranted them to desert him, and effectually warned them never to trust him more, whom no oaths nor laws could bind, and who had set up superstition against the gospel, jesuitism against the English hierarchy, acts of state framed by his Popish wife, and his Popish priests (all carefully tutored by France) against acts of Parliament.

What are the grievances at present? War and taxes, and foreign subsidies. Heavy evils, without doubt. But, from what causes, and

when did they begin ? Were they not all derived from the same root, from the same quarter and devilish policy, from whence we are just now threatened with relief ? They all came from France, and from the pernicious subserviency of our former princes to France. All that was sacred and valuable to England was then sacrificed to France ; English honour, the religion, the trade of England, with a balance of millions yearly in favour of France. These are, most probably, the intended blessings under which we are to be reinstated by the revolution now threatened.

Religion too often follows power, or is changed and subverted by power. France, by extending her sway, will extend Popery ; and if by planting a French deputy upon the English throne, she can master this great source, and asylum of Protestantism, religion will too naturally end, where there is an end of liberty.

What can be a more alarming call, what a more interesting quarrel ? It is literally *pro aris & focis* ; for whatever concerns God or conscience, whatever concerns our liberties and fortunes, to keep them or to lose them ; nay, to keep them or lose them for ever, is the dispute. Our enemies will be as eager to keep footing, as to gain it. If present defence and spirit be wanting, future remedies will probably be ineffectual.

What can be a more sensible insult, or higher provocation, than that a nation, whom we have always beaten, and are now beating, should dare to face our coasts, and audaciously threaten to conquer us, and even to rule us by a deputy ? Indeed, if they carry this point, they carry all. If they fail in this, they fail in all. The decision is short and comprehensible on both sides. If she succeed, we are undone : If she miscarry, she is finally baffled and vanquished.

NUMBER 87.

The shocking antipathy of Popery to Common Sense and Christian Charity.

THE further enthusiasm departs from reason, the more secure it is against reason. Moderate nonsense, nonsense that comes near the reach of reason, may be cured by reason ; but downright nonsense and contradiction is an overmatch for all the reason of mankind, especially when such nonsense is accounted sacred, and reason reckoned profane. Popish craft is aware of all this ; it knows where its chief strength lies, and never cheats by halves. Its delusion is above all human comprehension, and scorns argument as the work of carnal reason, perhaps a temptation from Satan.

By the same craft and fanaticism, the scriptures may be grossly abused by such as think that they believe the scriptures ; cruelty may be made to pass for charity, imposture for instruction ; and the gospel

itself for a book altogether unintelligible, and even dangerous, without the explication of the priest ; who therefore carefully keeps it from his poor dupes, and lets them have neither a New Testament nor a Saviour, but what are of his own making.

Their tenets, like their miracles, are foolish enough to raise laughter, were it not for their cruelty, which is without bounds, and, but for the daily practice of it, would be beyond belief. Whatever follies and extravagancies are found in all other religions, come far short of those in Popery, all wonderfully improved by all the visions of dreaming monks, and by all the adopted drolleries of Paganism.

But, reserving the fooleries of Popery for another paper, I shall observe here the mad assurance of Papists, in damning at once whole nations and empires ; indeed all that are not perverted into their own complication of frauds, nonsense, fanaticism, contradiction, hypocrisy, and cruelty. A Pagan perverted into Popery, is to be pitied ; yet, to make such proselytes, is the great boast and pursuit of their missionaries, who thence make them ten times more the children of ——— delusion.

Father Alexander de Rhodes, makes a bold, and I think an impious observation concerning the Chinese, though he makes it from what he thinks a spirit of piety. After he has computed the number of souls in that immense empire to be *two hundred and fifty millions*, he adds, with a sigh, “ That at least five millions of them are damned every year.” That is, the whole nation are as surely damned as they die, and as fast as they die. *Helas ! J'ay souvent fait le Compte, que tous les ans au moins cinque millions descendent aux enfers.*

Would any rational man, can any Christian man, be of the same religion with this blasphemous enthusiast, or bear to see such blasphemy and enthusiasm propagated in the world ? Such a principle charged upon Christianity would deter all who consult reason, and honour the Deity, from embracing it. Who, that does either, can believe that all the souls whom God creates, or hath created, are damned, unless they learn the Popish creed, which, perhaps, they never heard, or, perhaps, wanted capacity to understand, or thought themselves not obliged to believe upon the word of a missionary ? Could it be half so great a crime to deny the existence of a Deity, as to conceive the Deity to be such a cruel, such a diabolical being.

That crazy father adds, “ That yet we remain with our arms across, whilst Jesus Christ suffers such a mighty reproach.” A mighty reproach ! Who is it that offers it, except this father, or such enthusiasts, or impostors, who turn God into a tyrant, and religion into blasphemy.

Father Dandini breathes the same anti-christian spirit, which is indeed the spirit of that church. He was missionary and apostolic nuncio to the poor Christian Maronites upon mount Lebanon. He says, that they defer the baptism of their children 'till they are fifty or sixty days old : and then adds these horrible, these antichristian words : “ It thence happens, that they (the poor infants, guiltless, and incapable of guilt) die with the loss of their souls.” Such madmen and blasphemers are called teachers ! What tyrant, what demon, was ever charged with such transcendent cruelty, as is here charged upon the Father of mercies and of men ?

Can Protestants be too often warned against this restless, this bloody imposture, which abolishes truth and reason, and the mercies of God; an imposture which professes to banish Scripture, enslave conscience, and persecute Protestants; to usurp their wealth, to damn their souls, and to burn their bodies and Bibles.

NUMBER 88.

Dialogue between a Noble Convert and his late Confessor.

Conf. My Lord, I am sorry, seriously sorry, for the danger of your soul, from your wavering in the faith.

Lord. Father, I doubt I shall increase your sorrow when I assure you, that I do not waver—I think my soul safe in my present faith.

C. This fatal change touches my heart.

L. I dare say it does—you have lost me, and I have found myself.

C. My lord, you have made a sad change, and you are the chief loser by it.

L. One of us is—I have gained my senses, and you have lost the keeping of them.

C. That gain, I fear, will prove your perdition—would your lordship trust to the guidance of your senses, rather than to the guidance of the church?

L. You mean to your guidance; for you priests call yourselves the church. Do you, or do any of you, permit your followers to know any thing of the church, or of religion, but what you tell them?

C. We tell you what are the duties of religion, and teach you how to practise them: your senses may deceive you.

L. Or shew us that you do—an unpardonable offence and presumption!

C. In that very thing they deceive you, and ruin you, by depriving you of our guidance.—

L. And in this very thing you deceive us, by depriving us of the guidance of our senses.

● *C.* Alas! my Lord, they are dangerous guides! They are snares, by which Satan leads us into all error and peril, with our own consent and approbation.

L. That were dreadful indeed, if it were true!—But, father, I beg your pardon, I cannot take your word; for you are pleading your own cause. I am maintaining the use and clearness of my senses, in all duties moral, civil, and religious. My senses can have no interest in misleading me; nay, 'tis their interest to lead me right; for they are part of me, and in acting for me they act for themselves: neither can they hurt me without hurting themselves.—And if you have any interest in view, different from that of our senses, as it is manifest you have; it is likewise manifest, that it cannot be our interest.

C. How, my Lord ! Are not we your spiritual guides, engaged in your interest, your best interest, the interest of your soul ?

L. What ! against my senses ?

C. Yes ; I have told your Lordship, that your senses may prove a snare and a false light.

L. You have, indeed, often told me so ; and I too long believed you : but I now plainly perceive that my senses are my best preservatives against snares and false lights. Suppose my spiritual director imposes upon me, and carries on designs against me for his own advantage (father, such things have been !) how am I to detect him and escape his frauds ? Must I not consult and follow my senses ?

C. If your Lordship will be making uncharitable suppositions—

L. Father, do not force me into a detail of the cheats and combinations, and usurpations of your Romish priests—you know I have lately read some of your history.

C. We are not exempt from human frailty.

L. 'Tis too soft a name for such doings—But, if you are subject to these terrible frailties (and surely, spiritual fraud and villany are the greatest of all) are you proper guides to conduct us to heaven ? Or can we be so injurious to God and religion, as to think you have any credit there ?

C. My Lord, had not even the blessed apostles their infirmities ?

L. Not such as I mentioned—they were the best teachers, because they were the best of men. They wrought miracles publicly, which were therefore never suspected of forgery—They claimed no power, but persuasion. They did not turn the souls of men into commodities of price, nor salvation into a market—they neither sold, nor said, masses.

C. Perhaps they might not celebrate public devotion just in the same form that we do—but our forms are still apostolic, because framed and enjoined by the church—for the model and direction of religion are left by the apostles to the church ; and therefore whatever the church does is apostolic.

L. However unlike the apostles it be, it is well for you, that those first and true followers of Christ are above all vengeance : and whoever is not, is no follower of his. What dreadful examples they might make of you, for your infinite slander upon them ? Did the apostles convey to you what they had not themselves, nor sought ; and what their master had not, wealth and worldly dominion ?

C. My Lord, nothing is perfect at first ; no institution ever was.

L. How, father ! Could not he, who was perfect, make his own institution perfect ?

C. It is plain he did not : he left it to his apostles to improve it, and they to us, their successors.

L. So you were to complete what they did not, what the Son of God and his chosen twelve did not ?

C. He left us to explain his will, and to perform his ordinances.

L. As if he could not himself explain what himself revealed and dictated. And as to his ordinances, as they were the means of edification to all, they were left to all alike. The particular modes of adminis-

tering them were framed and limited by the consent of societies, the policy of states.

C. Can your Lordship possibly think them valid without us?

L. God forbid that I did not—what a shocking notion would it convey of the Father of wisdom, and of mercies, and of mercy to suppose him to leave the salvation of men, whom he has made and redeemed, to the mercy, and discretion, and designs of monks, pensioners and greedy monks?

C. What designs can they have, but to save men?

L. Yes; to enslave men, and to enrich themselves—have they not, under all the vows of poverty, engrossed, and are still engrossing, endless wealth? Do they not labour to govern the world, which they have renounced? And are these spiritual men exempt from the works of the flesh?

C. I have owned to your Lordship, that we have human frailties like other men.

L. If you be like other men, frail and fallible (for the former will for ever imply the latter) how are you better qualified than any other to save all?

C. Because we have a commission—

L. From one another, to serve yourselves, by selling the favours of heaven: for you do nothing for nothing; and whatever you have, you are still craving for more—can men be more abused, or the Almighty more belyed, than to suppose that any set of men, especially the most worldly of all men, the most vain, proud and vindictive, and equally vicious, should be trusted with a power to save all men? This would be to make the Almighty their confederate in a fraud.

C. Whatever mean opinion your Lordship has lately conceived of us, we have his commission.

L. You say that you have, and never was any thing more untruly said, even by you. Christ bade the apostles, “Go and speak to all nations.” But what are you the better for that? He did not apply himself to you, father Ambrose, and direct you “to count your beads, or say mass, nor order me, Lord —, to pay you for your pains.”

C. I hope, my Lord, he hath not left the Christian flock without Christian guides.

L. No, he left them the Bible.

C. The Bible! Alas, what a nose of wax?

L. You make it so, and pervert it abominably, to warrant all your impieties, contradictions, frauds and usurpations.

C. A heavy charge! What impieties, my Lord? What contradictions, frauds, and usurpations?

L. Whatever you resist, without warrant, is usurpation. The Scriptures gave you neither lands, nor dominions, nor titles.

C. Is not the labourer worthy of his hire?

L. No, if he be not hired, and yet would measure his own wages—Father, you no longer labour for me, and I shall no longer give you hire.

C. Hath not the Protestant church of England ministers; and have not these ministers a stated livelihood?

L. Yes, the law gives it them—the king is, by the law, supreme head of the church; and it is the king that executes the laws. An ecclesiastical establishment infers the necessity of ecclesiastical revenues.

C. I believe some of them claim a right more than merely legal.

L. I hope but few. They who do so belong to you, rather than to us. If they be in earnest, they are enthusiasts, and to be pitied: if they be not in earnest, they are impostors; a worse character, and undeserving of pity.

C. What your Lordship advances is true of heretics, who can claim no divine mission, and consequently no divine succession.

L. They may claim both as well, and as much as Catholics do. Calling men heretics is only calling names, and shewing spite or folly. They are chiefly madmen or impostors, who scatter and apply such names. Perhaps there is not a man in the world, but who is a heretic to every other man. Thinking and imagination have no standard; they are as various as taste, features, and complexion.

C. Then you reject the authority of the church to settle faith.

L. If by the church you mean the clergy, I do intirely. With your church the most profane extravagancies pass for faith. What can be more so than the unsizeable monster of transubstantiation, which alone contains all impiety and imposture, all assurance and nonsense?

C. I shall not enter into any discussion or defence of the profound mystery of transubstantiation.

L. I would not have you—it has been often, and lately, well exposed;—but you must not renounce such gainful and flattering blasphemy, which sets you above God, and makes men your slaves, body and soul, by frightening them out of their senses, men that can make God, may well set up to rule in his stead; may well give away and direct both the upper and nether world, much more this little one that lies between them.

C. My Lord, this pierces me—

L. I doubt it does not change you.

C. My Lord, I own it does not. But surely, if God institutes priests, he gives them some power, power to be useful.

L. He never gave you any power; and wherever you have it, you make it only useful to yourselves, and by it destroy many, and deceive all. All men have power to be useful to one another.

C. Is your Lordship then against all priests?

L. Against all that would enthrall and deceive me.

C. I am glad you allow that some do not.

L. I mean that our own do not.

C. My Lord, are they exempt from error?

L. No man is; but if they deceive us, 'tis our own fault. They are of our own choice and establishment. We allow them no power, but that of persuasion and the law of the land.

C. Do they not claim the power of making one another?

L. We give them that power, as we suppose them best acquainted with one another.—We even appoint and limit the manner of applying and exercising it.

C. Is there not such a thing as absolution amongst you?

L. Yes, the priest tells the people, what the word of God tells both him and them, and what any of us could tell them, if the law appointed us, "That God pardons and absolves sinners who truly repent." May not any Christian declare as much?

C. It is a very singular absolution which heretics and laymen can pronounce.

L. Of heretics I have spoke already. And as to laymen, why may they not (if appointed thereunto) read out of a book, what God has plainly written in his book, or what any other book takes out of God's book.

C. Are not the clergy only so appointed?

L. The law may appoint any man; it even declares what is Scripture; why not declare too, who is to read the Scripture, and to do all the duties of religion?

C. This is discharging all clergymen at once.

L. Why so? Whoever does the offices of religion, as the law appoints him, will be a clergyman in the eye and language of the law. The leaving you, the Romish clergy, to be masters in religion, has made you masters of mankind.

C. So the law is to take care of your souls.

L. It appoints us teachers, and leaves us the Bible to teach them and us too. We dread forciers of faith, and all who would punish us for not having theirs.

C. O my Lord, consider what a relief absolution is to a doubting and despairing soul.

L. Our absolution is sufficient, and the only one; any other is imposition and tyranny. Where God pardons, can you, dare you condemn? Where God condemns, can you, dare you punish?

C. We know who are proper objects of his mercy, and who of his wrath.

L. What then? Can you obstruct his wrath or mercy from reaching such objects?

C. We can labour to hasten his mercy, or to avert his wrath.

L. So can I and every man labour; but neither you nor I can inform God, or help him by our instruction. To the submissive and liberal, be they ever such offenders, your absolution is ready; and you damn the most innocent, who refuses to obey and pay. What can be more impudent and profane? There are no such impious doings amongst Protestants.

C. My Lord, pray consider——

L. I do, father; how tender you are upon this article?—It is indeed of high moment to your craft, to be thought to carry the fate of human souls in your own hands, to damn and save men, and to manage your Maker;—but, father, it is dreadful imposture and blasphemy; as your penalties and severities are dreadful cruelty.

C. I do not wonder to find your Lordship, when you had gone so far going still further, and declaring against church discipline too.

L. Father, if by church discipline you mean punishment for errors (which are generally involuntary, else men would not suffer for them), I think it diabolical; and if there be a hell upon earth, it is your inquisition; a lying, bloody, fiery, torturing tribunal, set up to guard

craft against conscience, and, under the cheating name of the holy office, fatal to all truth and religion.

C. Perhaps in some countries it may be carried too far; I wish it were not. There are many Catholic countries where it never was, nor would be suffered.

L. True, father, and you give the reason—No thanks to your religion and your priests——The true Catholic spirit is for it every where. In England its treachery began to operate, and its fires to flame, under the Catholic queen Mary, a zealot for Popery, and a murdering dæmon to her Protestant subjects. These had set her upon the throne, and in requital she burned them. What think you, father, of her faith, pledged to heretics?

C. They may have forfeited their right to it——

L. By being heretics. A fair confession! If you had not made it, we know your meaning. At least I do, who have conversed with you often upon the subject.

C. Is the world to be over-run with heretics, without restraint or remedy?

L. Can fire and sword remedy or restrain opinion? Or ought such remedies ever to be tried? Heretics may be good subjects to a state, as well as good Christians, and thence merit the protection of it. Have Catholics always been so?

C. Yes, to Catholic states.

L. A good hint, father—But often not then. Have not Catholic priests frequently plagued, sometimes murdered Catholic princes? And were they not prompted to it by the heads of the Catholic church?

C. Explanations may be offered——

L. To justify the church in her greatest foulness and enormities. You know she cannot err, and all her frauds and massacres are holy.

C. My Lord, times and circumstances, and the insolence of heretics——

L. Sanctify what never can be defended—The butchery of heretics is a just sacrifice to the offended Catholic church—What do we deserve, father, we English heretics?

C. I never heard an English Catholic wish you the least violence; they abhor it.

L. I know the sensible lay Catholics do—But what if the Pope should decree our chastisement (I will not call it by the worst name) and you priests, sworn blindly to obey him, and warmed with your own zeal, should urge the damnation of disobeying the Pope?

C. My Lord, I cannot suppose any such thing.

L. Father, I will not press you—I know you must either evade the question, or give an insincere answer. For the same reason I shall not perplex you with questions about the government, and the present attempts against it. Only I would beg you constantly to believe, that they will be blasted, and then you will be under no temptation to promote them.

C. My Lord, I love peace and am in no plot.

L. Persist there. Give me leave however to tell you what an unfortunate faith you hold. It flatters you with your own importance, even to blasphemy. For, not to meddle with the glaring, bold, and wonderful lie of infallibility (an incommunicable attribute of the om-

nipotent and omnipresent God, never to be found in frail men) can there be greater blasphemy than your doctrine of making your Maker, and that of disposing of heaven and hell, and the souls of men?

C. Do not your clergy assert the real presence in the sacrament, after they have blessed the elements?

L. They who mean more than the divine blessing and efficacy of that holy ordinance upon their souls are not Protestants.—Then, father, your anti-christian principles of punishing men for religious opinions, principles so destructive of religion and human society, make you dreadful, not to say odious, to all men who follow reason and the gospel.

C. The Policy of the church was devised for the preservation of the church; which cannot be done without power, nor power be exerted without penalties.

L. There is no such policy in the gospel, no church power, no civil penalties.

C. It was found necessary——

L. Not by Christ, nor by his apostles. Was it not apostacy to relinquish and contradict their example?

C. Have not the Protestant clergy been for wholesome severities?

L. No true Protestants——bigots and apostates, if you please——and such, if there be any such remaining, the civil power curbs, as it should the ecclesiastics every where. They are too subject to zeal without knowledge. Our present clergy especially their chiefs, are famous for moderation. This is true Christian merit. Whatever be the cause, let them have their due praise.



NUMBER 89.

Continuation of a Dialogue between a Noble Convert and his late Confessor.

C. My Lord, heretics must not pretend to——

L. As much as you do, and as reasonably to do mischief.—Suppose they were to retaliate upon you, to entertain no charity; to keep no faith towards you, and to return your own wholesome severities upon you; to set up an inquisition, to imprison and torture, confiscate and burn Catholics, as Catholics do Protestants; and, in short, none of you were suffered to live unmolested amongst them,—with what face could you complain?

C. They themselves own, that salvation is to be had in our church; we deny it to them. Is not this a proof that we are the only orthodox church?

L. It is an evident proof of the contrary. That church which wants charity, wants Christianity. Whoever has most charity is the best Christian. Men had better be without religion, than savages for it. The most barbarous sects, Turks and Tartars, flatter themselves, and damn

all others, in the same style. The most flaming enthusiasts, such as took madness for religion, have boldly claimed an exclusive heaven, and wantonly consigned all the rest of the world to hell.

C. My Lord, we would punish and suppress all such enthusiasts.

L. And do yourselves just what they do. This damning spirit is a sign that religion is perverted into faction, and that they who possess it would frighten men, in order to enslave them. It is a studied fraud, to acquire dominion and money, and a plain renouncing of the spirit of Christ. I wonder how a man, who finds himself possessed with such a spirit, can have peace of mind, or expect favour from God or man. But enthusiasts can reconcile contradictions. All uncharitableness tends to persecution; and 'tis high assurance in a man of a persecuting spirit, to offer to make converts. If ever any man could warrant persecution, the persecutor warrants it against himself.

C. My Lord, I have said nothing to provoke you to all this bitterness against the Catholic church; I only alledged, that you Protestants gave it the preference to your own.

L. No, we do not: we say that yours is a corrupt, idolatrous, and anti-christian church; but we are not bold enough to confine the mercies of God, which are infinite; and therefore allow his infinite mercies to extend even to uncharitable Papists, who are the more to be pitied for their cruel want of charity. So that, in allowing salvation to be had in your church, we make a compliment to our own by owning, that it abounds in charity. Father, I have been the longer upon this head, because I know it to be your great bait to catch old women, children, and the rabble. Your argument is shocking to common sense. The more I think of you and your church, the gladder I am to have left you. Where has God said, that he will damn any man for not going to mass, or for dissenting from any religious mode, or any clerical institution?

C. My Lord, must not the church be supported with proper sanctions and terrors?

L. You support yours with dreadful ones indeed; but the church of Christ abhors all such. If you claim any such, he disclaims you.—Dungeons, flames, and tortures, are no legacy from him; nor can there be a stronger proof that any church is not from God, than that she exercises any vengeance and fury in his name. There cannot be a higher insult upon the name of Christ, nor a greater affront to the reason of men, than the alledging a warrant from that holy, meek, and humble name, for any sort of severity, much more for any cruelty, or even for any share of power or pride.

C. What thinks your Lordship of the Jewish church? Did not the Almighty environ her with authority and penalties?

L. Yes; but the civil magistrate had the application of them; and God always speaks to the priests by Moses, his representative. Father, how do you like the example? Besides, every ceremony, and the whole Jewish discipline, were precisely described and limited by God himself, and nothing left to the direction of the priests, not even their own garments, nor the utensils of sacrifice, nor the forms at the altar.—Can you shew any such authority for your endless grimaces, or for any of your pious tricks and postures? Did the wise God indite your motley names? Did the God of mercy frame your inquisition, or command you

to murder or torture your fellow-creatures, for words and forms, and opinions, which are for the most part involuntary, and often thought godly, and therefore indispensable? But pray, father, why do you urge Judaism? Is it not abolished? And do you not burn Jews?

C. I own Judaism to be abolished; but I deny that we burn Jews, or any body else.

L. How! Are not both Jews and Christians burned in the Catholic countries every day?

C. It is done by the civil power—we wash our hands of it;—nay, we bear our strongest testimony against it, and even beseech the civil magistrate, in the bowels of Jesus Christ, not to hurt life or limb of heretics condemned.

L. Impudent mockery of God and man! If the magistrate did not burn the heretic, you would soon burn the magistrate as a favourer of heretics. Such an Atheistical stretch of hypocrisy is beyond any of the frauds or barbarities of Paganism, and new in the creation till devised by Catholic priests.

C. I own the severity of the inquisition may be carried too far.

L. How gently spoken of such an infernal tribunal!

C. It is not, perhaps, to be justified in all points.—But it is always represented worse than it is.

L. Father, it cannot; the most innocent man is obnoxious to it; the most pious man is most obnoxious; all that he hath is seized as soon as he is accused; and his family, without being accused at all, are left to perish. He is secured in a dismal dungeon, bereft of all comfort, surrounded with all terrors, with the menaces of the rack, and continual alarms from the gaoler to prepare for it. After lying many months in this hideous situation, under dreadful tumult of mind, without knowing for what offence (for no witnesses appear) he must at last accuse and convict himself: though he cannot, he must confess unknown guilt, by the force of torture, all his limbs disjointed, his bowels burst with a torrent of water, poured into him by force, and all vent carefully stopped; his back broken, his feet scorched up to a scroll; and against relief from death, an attending physician declares how much more he can bear. After several repetitions of the rack, always a full hour at a time, he must invent crimes against himself, and then be consigned to perish in flames, often made slow to prolong the torture. Neither, for all these his hellish sufferings, must his nearest relations, his tender wife or infants venture to bewail him, much less complain for him; unless they have a mind to undergo the very same. During all this frightful process, the poor victim is deafened with the cry of the mercies of the holy office: for so these bloody hypocrites call their slaughter-house.

C. My Lord, it is still holy, though it may be stretched too far.

L. That is indeed strange. How can such a complication of avarice, fraud, and blood, be holy?

C. To prevent souls from going astray by punishing those that do.

L. Monstrous position! Who but such who make a market of souls can maintain it? Another, and an equal horror, attends all this group of horrors;—the wretched martyr is continually tempted to damn his soul, by sacrificing his conscience to save himself from the flames.

C. Can a man damn his soul by reconciling himself to the Catholic church ?

L. Catholic church ! Priestly cant ! It is a conspiracy against God and man ; such a system of fraud and cruelty, as none but the enemies of God and man could invent. Could the devil devise, or inflict any thing more devilish than the inquisition ?

C. My Lord, I am against its excesses ; but are there no terrors, no restraint to be laid upon heresy, to secure the Catholic church from its ravages ?

L. Truth, and sense, and conscience, are heresy in the eye of your church ; and a restraint upon these is impiety and tyranny in any church. The smallest penalty upon conscience implies the highest and last penalty, which must be exerted when smaller penalties fail ;—so naturally do racks and flames follow fines and gaols.

C. How is obstinacy to be conquered ?

L. By persuasion, or not at all. But what you often call obstinacy I call reason and piety. With you all steady Protestants are obstinate heretics ;—and you have often kindled your fires, even here in England, to punish their obstinacy. Nay, when some of them, terrified by flames, have declared themselves Catholics, you have them burned lest they should relapse. Father, with what face can you tempt any Protestant into your church.

C. Because it is the only true church.

L. Then there never was, there never can be, a false church. The truth is, the proselytes you gain (generally the lowest and most ignorant of the people) you gain by downright falsehoods.

C. That, my Lord, is a very heavy charge.

L. The more so for being true ; your conversions, like your miracles, are done in corners, and wrought upon none but the superstitious and blind.

C. My Lord, we make converts by bringing them into new light.

L. So say the Mahometans, and so say all impostors ; and so all misled enthusiasts believe. Transubstantiation, and other lying wonders, are some of your new lights. That all Protestants are damned, is another of your new lights ; with other the like anti-christian and damnable positions.

NUMBER 90.

Continuation of a Dialogue between a Noble Convert and his late Confessor.

C. We do maintain that ours is the Catholic, that is, the universal church of Christ.

L. Another false light, as obvious and shameless as the rest.

C. It is what your Lordship once believed.

L. The more fool I. I may thank you ; I took your word for all

things, and trusted in you implicitly : I heard nothing but what you told me ; I read nothing but what you permitted me.

C. Surely I put the best books into your hands.

L. The best to blind my eyes : the lives of your crazy saints, and their ridiculous miracles ; panegyrics upon Popery, and invectives against Protestants. Don't you remember, when I had a mind to look into the works of Locke and Tillotson, and Hoadly, as writers remarkable for sound reasoning and candor, you told me that Tillotson was an Atheist, Locke a Hobbist, and Hoadly a Presbyterian, a name that you had taught me to detest. And when I was curious to see Milton, and asked you about him, you said he had a devil.

C. I spoke but the sense of the church.

L. The Universal church ?

C. Yes, my Lord. That she is Universal, is as true as that her being so is a proof that she is the only church of God.

L. Mahomet may offer the same proof for his church. His hath more members, and more unity, than yours ; and is less bloody. She tolerates all sects, even all sects of Christians ; and you destroy all, or terrify them into hypocrites, many into Atheism ; such especially, who judging of all religion by yours, rather than believe such a chaos of nonsense, contradictions, pride, lust and rapine, fraud and cruelty, to be from God, conclude that there is none.

C. My Lord, there are men of parts and learning in our church ; if they saw or thought her such a monster, would they continue in her ?

L. Yes, they must or be undone, and destroyed. Besides, learning is often found accompanied with enthusiasm, as well as with other weakness and follies. Monsieur Paschal, a learned, candid and acute writer, as any of his age, to prove the church of Rome the true church, from her possessing the pretended power of miracles, is so simple as to urge the blood of Januarius melting annually upon the anniversary of his martyrdom.

C. O my Lord ! Is not that wonderful ?

L. It is wonderfully alledged. Father, I have seen that false miracle, which is worked to no end but to cheat the people, and to feed monks. None are suffered to examine it, and all the rest believed it before. It is like all the rest of yours, a ridiculous forgery !

C. What ! All our miracles forgeries, my Lord ?

L. Father, I have but one rule to guide me : as there is no use of miracles, but to convince unbelievers, they ought to be worked chiefly, if not only, before unbelievers. Strange feats said to be done, but done in bugger-mugger, amongst interested men and bigots, will always pass for cheats amongst men of sense. The vial said to contain the blood of Januarius, is carefully and leisurely heated with the warm hands of the officiating friars ; and sometimes, with all that help, the miracle is very dilatory in appearing.

C. My Lord, heretics are so hardened as not to see, and even disown what they really see.

L. They must see what is done before their eyes, unless they put them out. Besides, their curiosity would prompt them to see, to say nothing of their interest. Father, work me but one fair miracle, and I will return to you again, without another argument.

C. My Lord, did I ever pretend to work any ?

L. You are for ever urging those of your church, and they are one of the great topics of your reasoning with the wretches you convert; and, whilst you mislead them with what is false, you conceal from them and utterly deny, what is notoriously true.

C. My Lord, what do we deny that is true?

L. Every thing that shews the deformity and cruel spirit of your church. I shall not repeat your many and continued misrepresentations to myself; but I cannot forget your behaviour to my servants, as I have since learned.

C. I hope, my Lord, I have done my duty towards your servants.

L. Yes, the duty of a Romish emissary. When you were converting my postillion Natt, (for John the coachman was too hard for you, and laughed at your precious relique of a cord from St. Peter's drag-net, by which you would fain have convinced him that all Protestants were damned) as poor Natt, who was of Irish Protestant parents, abhorred the Irish massacre, you assured him solemnly, that it was all a vile forgery, maliciously framed to blacken the Catholics. You wept for the poor persecuted Catholic church, herself the most merciful, the most charitable, church in the whole world, and an utter enemy to all persecution.

C. I gave him a true account.

L. A moving one you did, and by it melted the heart of Natt. This, with your pious kindness in rescuing this poor soul from damnation finished his conversion.

C. I bless God, he perseveres in it.

L. You keep him in it. The like rhetoric made the dairy maid your convert. You found her one Sunday morning reading Fox's Acts and Monuments, and shedding tears over the memory of the Protestant martyrs burned in queen Mary's reign.— You too shed tears, to see such an innocent soul so misled: you conceived a passionate kindness for her soul, tenderly undertook to save it; then defended the poor, belyed, meek church, and that pious queen, who had, sore against her will, seen her counsel condemn so many of her poor subjects, though heretics, for treason against her person. To confirm the maid, and effectually to ensure her salvation, you gave her a bead of St. Bridget's, one that the devil, abhorring its intrinsic value, had often stole away, but was always forced to bring back again: a further proof of its value, from its power over the devil.

C. My Lord, you are pleased to laugh at my poor pious endeavours to do good.

L. I wish I could call them poor. My poor servants, for you have perverted three or four of them, are so bewitched with the *Karee-shews* and symphonies in the mass, and with your absolution, which sets their consciences so much at rest, let them wrong me as much, and commit as great disorders as they will, in my family or out of it, that I doubt they have taken leave of our church (which affords them no such shews nor comfort) for ever.

C. My Lord, you yourself found comfort amongst us once, and then you disliked the religion in fashion.

L. I own it. You taught me to abhor it, and to adore yours; and you did so, by the same fraudulent wiles and misrepresentations. You persuaded me, particularly, that the Pope did not pretend to give away

kingdoms; but studied, like a father, the peace of society. My parson has since shewn me a decree of the council of Lateran under Innocent III. expressly ordaining, That the Pope shall discharge the subjects of an heretical prince from their allegiance, and give away his kingdom to a Catholic prince, in order to exterminate heretics: a devilish power, which the Pope hath often exerted, and still pretends to.

C. The thing has been subject to dispute—

L. To a knavish distinction rather.—“The Pope, says Bellarmine, allows you to obey your king; but when he is a heretic he is no longer your king.”

C. My Lord, this is at least fair warning.

L. Yes, and we take it—Nor, amongst all the just prejudices against your church (and God knows they are many and shocking!) need there be a greater than your treating, as your head and sovereign director, an old frail friar, complimenting him with infallibility, and the attributes of God; investing him with the power of God, to damn and save; and as the same Bellarmine maintains, to make virtue to be vice, and vice to be virtue. What blasphemy! Many Popes have been monsters in all wickedness and pollution, chosen by harlots, and living in brothels: all of them subject to common frailties; some of them downright changelings; none of them, amidst all this wonderful power, able to restore a lost tooth, or to cure his own cough.

C. My Lord, the abuse of authority doth not infer its nullity.

L. Yes, certainly, in such extravagant and impious trusts as cannot but be abused.

C. Will your Lordship allow no head to the church?

L. Yes, surely; Christ and his word; and, under him, the Christian heads of society.

C. Are such heads likely to be free from error?

L. They will certainly err the less, for not pretending to be free from error.—No church in the world has ever produced such tragical abominations as your infallible church has produced; but you keep most of these carefully concealed from your poor blind dupes; I know it by experience: and such of your impostures and fooleries as you cannot conceal, you disguise and adorn as holy mysteries.

C. My Lord, I hope it is lawful to revere mysteries—

L. Not such as cannot come from God. You may as well bring your gunpowder treason out of the gospel, as your transubstantiation.

C. We are unjustly reproached with that treason.

L. So you have often told me, and so you are all instructed to tell your bubbles—Just as, for the credit of your church, you persuade most of your Popish thieves to die innocent—I know something of your policy in that matter.

C. Surely your Lordship knows the gunpowder treason to be a trick of state.

L. Yes, one of your tricks of state; so do you. The evidence was all from those of your own communion;—many died justifying it; none denied it:—but when it was found that a design to blow up the three estates of the realm; a design concerted by Papists, all men of condition, some of them of great quality, and approved by

all the heads of the Papists, brought a horrible stain upon Popery, then your preachers, and confessors, and writers, were taught boldly to deny it.

C. My Lord, I always thought it too bad to be probable.

L. What think you of the massacre of Paris ?

C. I never justified it.

L. The Pope did ; ——— therefore you must. Then there is that of which we have spoken, the inquisition, I think the worst of all. A horrible tribunal ! settled for the constant execution of cruelty and fraud : you are far from giving up that.

NUMBER 91.

Remainder of a Dialogue between a Noble Convert and his late Confessor.

C. My Lord, I have blamed its excesses—

L. Without naming them.—Father, the thing itself is an excess, an infernal excess. You know the whole of it as well as I do ; but dare not own it, in any of its just colours, to your English penitents. You cannot but remember what you told my bricklayer's labourer when he broke his leg, and you, in the poor fellow's affright and distress, plied him about his being a heretic, and insinuated to him, that this was the cause of so heavy a judgment upon him.

C. Perhaps it would have been well for him if he himself had believed so.

L. Yes ; then you would have had him sure. I say you must remember, that when you were haranguing to him upon the matchless charity and tender mercies of the Catholic church, in order to bring him into it, and the poor man mentioned the inquisition, of which it seems he had read a good deal more than you cared he should, you cried out, with hands lifted up, and a heavy sigh, " O the flagitious malice of men !" —Then turning to the poor man, you added, " You see, dear child, how one fatal error brings on another, and many. Had you been of the church, you would have found how grievously the church is wronged." You then assured him, that the Inquisition was a criminal court, set up chiefly by the state, against apostate infidel Moors and Jews, who were all public traitors ; but that it never hurt any good Catholic ; or, which is the same thing, any good Christian.

C. Was there not great truth in this ?

L. There was great truth concealed—Was this a picture of the Inquisition ?

C. I think it was pretty near the matter.

L. Not the least resemblance. Your authority, with your gracious and devout manner, staggered the weak fellow, and you might have probably got him over : but my old steward Goulding overhearing you when you least thought of it, asked you, with a great zounds, " Are

not the inquisitors all priests, and the only masters there ; and are not all Protestants burnable by the laws and constant practice of the inquisition ?"—A question which you chose not to answer, but went away, pitying, as you went, the poor passionate man for cursing so abominably. Goulding replied, " Whoever it is that curses, by — I know who it is that lies." You then complained of persecution, and retired.

C. Your Lordship is very particular.

L. I had it from La Trappe, my *valet de chambre*, whom you once attacked, but soon gave over. He produced you Mons. Dailly and Dr. Tillotson—No wonder the latter is so great an atheist. I cannot say but I then first began to doubt, next to examine ; and whoever does both will soon leave you. A church of such a lying, cruel, damning, burning spirit, ought to be the abhorrence of all men.

C. Could you not leave us without becoming our enemy ?

L. An enemy to your system, I own I am, without any prejudices purely personal. All that leave you are in your opinion certainly damned, though they left you upon the fullest inquiry and conviction.

C. It is possible that they may be too rash, whatever they think.

L. They can never be too hasty in going over to you, but are always rash in deserting you. Nothing can be more dishonest than this your conduct ; you pretend to convince people by reason and the Bible, but will you suffer them to be re-convinced when they find ever so just cause from both to leave you ?

C. When they are in the right way, my Lord, we are willing to keep them there. Are we to be blamed ?

L. Yes, if you would keep them against their conscience, when you had gained them by appealing to their conscience. They must then follow you, and obey you, and renounce their reason, their conscience, and their Bible. This is ensnaring and enslaving men, and not converting them.

C. Their conscience may mislead them, and often does.

L. If they mean conscientiously it is sufficient, and God will pardon their involuntary mistakes. Conversion, not founded upon conscience and conviction, is hypocrisy or servitude. The truth is, as you teach an implicit faith, that is, religion without reason ; and as ignorance is confessed to be the mother of devotion, that is, of devotion without sense, you hold your followers not by conviction, which only can make people religious, and keep them so ; but by the force of superstition, by fairy menaces, or by temporal terrors ; all which keep them fast in your chains. Your true Catholics are not followers of Christ, but followers of you. He who is not a Christian by conviction is no Christian ; and conviction implies reason.

C. We deny no man the use of his reason.

L. When he uses it not against you, nor in religious points. But dare a Spaniard, dare an Italian, dare any Papist whatsoever, reason with you upon religion, and oppose his doubts to your dictates ? If any man dares to do so abroad, the inquisition waits for him with all its flames and rage. If any man thwarts your authority and tenets even here, he will have hell set open to swallow him, and all its furies let loose upon him.

C. Are men always to wander in uncertainty ?

L. Yes, 'till they are fixed by conviction and conscience.

C. What if they never fix ?

L. If they never do, no man can force them ; they must be left to God. Better their minds wander (a thing that hurts no man) than be cowed, and their bodies punished or enslaved.

C. Is it not a great blessing to be restrained from foul error ?

L. No error is foul if it be harmless ; besides, if what would restrain error, would also restrain reason and truth (the genuine end of all your restraints) I detest the impious policy. The noblest notions of God appear atheistical to all bigots ; and all bigots are persecutors. Socrates was put to death for his rational sentiments of the Deity ; nor was he the last. The wisest men are often sacrificed to what mad zealots call holy. It was capital in Egypt to kill one of their sacred beasts, a wolf, a crocodile, or a cat.

C. Do we, my Lord, defend heathen idolatry and heathen cruelty ?

L. No, you only imitate them, and exceed them. These heathens, though mad enough to destroy such, who hurt their ravenous objects of worship, were not so mad as to kill or punish men for refusing to worship them.

C. My Lord, what wild beasts do we worship ?

L. You worship worse objects, Ignatius Loyola, and that most bloody priest, Dominic, founder of the inquisition. What ravenous beast ever proved such a pest to society as Thomas à Becket did to England ?

C. He was indeed passionately zealous for the church.

L. For Popery, and for tyranny in his own person, a lawless and vindictive incendiary, who defied the laws of the land, and even those of the living God.

C. Your Lordship is assuredly too just to think him an atheist.

L. I think him worse ; as no atheist ever did so much mischief. Under that character a man can never do much, but will rather frighten men than convert them. But Becket played the devil by affecting saintship ; and, to the eternal infamy of your church, obtained it. The dead traitor had more oblations paid him, than our blessed Redeemer and his blessed mother.

C. My Lord, this is a wide field your Lordship is got into, and—

L. Father, I see that you are tired, and so am I—Let me, however, offer to your consideration a passage from the judicious Plutarch : Speaking of human sacrifices offered to Saturn by the Carthaginians, during a famine, five hundred at once, two hundred of them picked from the best families, the rest volunteers from amongst the citizens, he asks, “ Whether that people had not acted more wisely, if they had chosen for their legislator a Critias or Diagoras, both known atheists, than to have established such a sanguinary institution ? ”

C. What would your Lordship infer from all this to our present purposes ? Not surely, that Catholics are worse than atheists !——

L. The word Catholic hath a solemn, indeed a deceitful sound, and is very boldly assumed, to exclude all other Christians from Christ's church and from the benefit of his death. But it is of a piece with the devilish spirit of Popery, which avowedly damns, and, where it can, actually destroys all those of a different faith.——This, father, you cannot deny.

C. We would willingly save all men.——

L. And allow none to be saved but yourselves—Those who will not submit to your terms of salvation, must be victims and fuel to the inquisition.—

C. Still, my Lord, this is not Atheism.—

L. It is human sacrifice, and worse than Atheism.—Nor can I conceive so wicked, so dreadful a being, in the whole compass of nature, as a Papist heated with bigotry and vengeance, and acting up to the rigour of Popish principles—Is a devil worse than an inquisitor, who is only a punisher for religion, or a persecutor, acting in his highest sphere?—What a pestilent ingredient must a zealous Papist be in a community of Protestants?—His zeal makes him a busy seducer; and every person seduced is, must be, a keen enemy to the community. And as the seducers are many and indefatigable, the seduced are without number. Let the legislature attend to this. Moreover, the conscience of every convert to Popery is the Pope's, and obliges him to hate all who abjure the Pope and the Pope's pupil. Yet what tender usage you all find, father, under this government! Dare any Popish state be guilty of the like tenderness to Protestants?

C. My Lord, your Lordship will allow—

L. Father, I will allow nothing to the temper of you and your converts.—I know how determined, how ready you all are, and for what. You and they are all warm zealots. They are mostly as poor as ignorant, and subject to none of those pauses which retard men of fortune and families, and who have some sense, in spite of bigotry.—I know your ardour and influence, and the spirit of your religion, so well, that I often rejoice and wonder, that I am not hanged. Ah! father, had I been advised or frightened by you (for you importunately tried both ways) where must I have been?

C. If not here, I hope in heaven.—

L. By your help and that of Mr. Ketch—After all, as much as I dread Popery, I am not for destroying Papists, though they have always, and every where, shewn us the way, and wantonly tempted us to follow them in it.—But I am earnestly for disabling Popery from destroying Protestants; and if some such scheme is not effectually pursued, I shall think the Parliament in a lethargy, the government infatuated, and the nation desperate.—

Adieu, father, I shall be glad to see you sometimes.—But no whispering, no closeting, no dark applications to my family.—I shall heartily endeavour to reclaim those of them whom you have already poisoned.

NUMBER 92.

*King James II. his disgraceful reign. His Impotence and Cruelty.
He exposes and deposes himself.*

AN hereditary right to preserve the laws, is inherent in all lawful kings; an hereditary claim to break the laws, is a forfeiture of all kingly right. Indefeasible hereditary right is jargon, the cant of usurpers and impostors, to cheat the many, and abuse all men.

Blood is only one qualification in a prince, and not the highest; justice and capacity are the greatest and the best. As the prince may be a child, and yet must reign like a man, because he reigns over men, the laws must govern those who govern the prince; else the will of his ministers, or his playfellows, must be the law. If he prove a lunatic, the next of kin, or a counsel, must rule in his stead. He who hath no sense cannot exercise government, which is the direction of the public sense. He who wants justice and integrity, and regards not oaths and laws, is at least under equal disability. This is moral, as well as political lunacy; therefore a moral and political disqualification.

Whoever is intrusted with government, having the interests of all men under his direction, has the highest occasion for a good heart, as well as a sound head: but where the laws prevail, though he be weak, yet, by letting the laws take place, his government may be easy. If he be wilful, as well as weak, yet will needs be wiser than the law, dispense with law, and set up his own humour, his peevishness, or his superstition, for law, he becomes a public enemy, a tyrant, who deposes himself.

Such a public enemy was king James, an obstinate bigot, a perjured oppressor, an open foe to the laws and to his people: he therefore regularly dethroned himself. He can scarce be said to have ever filled the throne: he began to forfeit it e'er he was warm in it. The English throne, established and limited by laws, ceased to be his, when he became a tyrant in it. Whilst he held it, he held it not for himself, but for miserable monks and hot headed zealots, who set up a government against law, a religion against sense, and the shadow of a king to support both. He never had much understanding; what little he had he forfeited, and with it his crown, to the infatuation of Popery.

A weak man makes a very good Papist, indeed the best; but a weak Papist makes a wretched king. I own, that a man of sense may be a Papist; but I deny, that he makes use of his sense: the grimace and fraud of priests blind him, and fairy terrors awe him.

King James, the weakest of his race, (though not the worst nor the falsest) yet strove for some time to dissemble; but wanting capacity even for that (which requires so little, and is often found in the silliest women) soon exposed his heart quite bare, contracted with bigotry, panting for tyranny, and cankered with rage.

He had professed fairly, promised strongly, sworn solemnly, to maintain religion and law ; because his priests told him, that falsehood and perjury were necessary to advance their cause, and seasonable to lull their enemies asleep : for what falsehood, what villainy, what cruelty, will not such priests promote, to serve their pestilent cause ? When his priests thought their point sure, they taught him to throw off the cloak of deceit and perjury, roundly to assert the determined tyrant, and the implacable bigot.

He thus called upon the nation to turn him out of it, or rather fled from the nation. He ran to the French king, the inveterate enemy to his people, for succour against his people. It was upon promise of assistance from that king, that both this bigot, and the abandoned voluptuary his brother, had ventured to enslave this free nation.

Lewis XIV. was as dark a zealot as James II. with no exalted genius ; but judging the ruin of England to be for the glory of France, sent forces to king James, then in Ireland, who put himself at the head of these and his Irish troops : he indeed continued at their head, for he was the first that ran away.

Again he took refuge in France, where he remained, despised, to the end of his life ; the more for his continual solicitations to France, to force him and slavery upon England : for, rather than England should remain free, he would have enslaved it as the deputy of France.

Had he an hereditary right to sacrifice England to France ? Can the heart of man conceive, that any man, with any name, has a right to violate any trust ? Hath folly a right to dictate to wisdom ; perjury, pride and oppression, to abolish wholesome laws ; fraud and imposture to crush truth and religion ?

In Ireland his government was as brutal as the manners of the native savages there : he set out with deceitful promises, as he had done here ; and continued repeating them all the while that he was breaking them. One constant declaration of his was most ridiculous, especially as he imagined it to be deep and wise, and as his flatterers applauded it for its candor : “ That he would make no distinction between his Popish and his Protestant subjects.” A declaration (if not a blunder) terrible to Protestants, who saw him thus, contrary to his oath taken to maintain them in their religion and laws, declare equal favour to their barbarous bloody enemies, who in fact reaped all his favours.

He was so notoriously shameless in his breach of faith to Protestants, and in his bigotted partiality to the Irish, that, by a set of infamous perjured Irish judges, he discharged all the charters of the kingdom in a term or two. The estates of the Protestants, nobles and commons, were by the same judges surrendered as fast as claimed by any of the wild Irish, who had long forfeited them by rebellion and massacre. The Protestant proprietors, who had earned them by their blood and money, improved them by their long industry, and held them by acts of settlement, were thrust out of their freeholds and bread by the brutal butchers of their predecessors, of their parents and kindred.

But as process at law, however sudden and arbitrary, was too slow, an Irish Parliament of the furious natives, chosen by the king's new charters, or rather by his direction and nomination, did, in a solemn

act, confiscate most of the estates of the Protestants in the whole kingdom, and condemned the owners to die as traitors. They were all thus charged with treason, and all in a lump condemned to death and forfeiture ; for they were declared convicted of high treason, tho' never tried, nor even summoned. The frightened victims had many of them recourse to England for bread ; and families of fair fortunes in Ireland saw themselves reduced, for support, to alms and parochial collections in England.

This was adjudging a whole Protestant kingdom, at once, to execution and destruction. It comprehended near fifteen hundred of the nobility, gentry, clergy, and men of fortune, all said in the act to have been attained and convicted, and were therefore adjudged to death and confiscation. To render the deadly snare the more fatal and secure, no copy of the inhuman act was suffered to be issued for four months.

After this flight of tyranny (so wild and merciless !) no other excess of it need be wondered at. Subjects were imprisoned ; their money, horses, houses, and furniture seized, by a mere order from the king ; sometimes a mere verbal order. And James, one of the weakest men in the kingdom, and as blind a bigot as the blindest, acted like the confirmed master of the persons and property of all men in it ; yet was himself all the while the wretched property and tame instrument of the Pope, and even of his own priests. Whilst it was made treason and death for five Protestants to be seen together, even in churches, the king's chaplains, in their public sermons, maintained to his face the Pope's absolute sovereignty over kings.

Strange inconsistency ! for a frail, vicious, silly man, to claim god-like power over God's creatures, made after God's image (many of them wiser and better, few worse or weaker than himself ;) yet confess himself the implicit vassal of an usurping impostor at Rome, cheating the world with pious cant and mountebankry, impudently boasting lying wonders, and subsisting by manifest frauds !

Can there be a greater demonstration, that power without controul belongs to no human creature ; than that such as have most loudly claimed it over all, were unblessed with any superior capacity, or any better morals than the rest ? Is it conceivable, that the God of wisdom should adjudge the government of the world to such as have none ; the care of men to such as oppress men ; should convey his own power to those who abuse it, or invest with a sacred character men who swear falsely by his holy name, or injure and cheat in it ?

King James delighted in lawless proceedings, merely because they were lawless. Even when the law would have served him in some of his measures, it was answered, That the king would be served his own way ; which was a confession, that he would abolish law.

James, when duke of York, and high commissioner in Scotland, had given a specimen of his spirit and government sufficient to deter all men from ever wishing him upon the throne. He opposed and defeated, or cancelled, every good law : he promoted all that were tyrannical and bad : he had the earl of Argyll condemned to die, because he would not forswear himself. The earl was a good Protestant, had a great estate, great interest and abilities ; all dreadful eye sores to the small spirit and great bigotry of the duke of York. His Royal High-

ness besides, delighting in frequent victims and executions at Edinburgh, distinguished himself by a symptom of cruelty almost peculiar to himself, and almost always avoided by the most cruel princes, by such as were proverbial for cruelty, even by Nero. James, besides encouraging the use of the rack, to force confessions from such who were obnoxious to the tyranny of the times, sat pleased with the shocking spectacle of seeing men racked, their bones crushed, broken, and bursting with their blood through the flesh: a horrid sight to Britons! A hopeful successor to the British crown! It was a sight singular in Britain, and even at Rome, under the tyranny of the Cæsars, for near a century after the usurpation of the first Cæsar. That monster Domitian was the first of the Roman imperial tyrants that ventured upon it.

Neither did any of these imperial tyrants ever exercise such a piece of tyranny as was exercised in Scotland under Charles the Second. Besides all the daily oppressions and barbarities upon the Presbyterians there (forced out of their established church, and fiercely persecuted) to oblige the court, especially James the king's brother, there was an order of council for placing soldiers on the public roads, with instructions to ask such as passed by, insnaring questions, about the king and religion; and if they appeared to be Presbyterians (people conscientiously tender in the point of religion and oaths) and refused the test offered them by the soldiers, the soldiers had express orders to put them to present death.—A stretch of tyranny unmatched by the most decried tyrants!

These were some of the miscarriages, before the revolution, such as the present invader supposes to have happened, without owning any; and he claims the same right and power claimed by king James, nor offers one limitation or amendment. The government ever since then, that government, from which has been derived such a series of ease and liberty, and such an utter absence of all violent measures, as are matchless in history from the creation; has, he says, been all usurpation. It has been indeed a total deviation from the government of his ancestors, a government which he comes to restore. To prove his right and descent, and to recommend his future measures, he invades the kingdom, defies the laws, robs, ravages, and goes to mass.

These are the proofs which he gives of his lineal claim, and he is welcome to the fame of them. He, and his barbarous train, act as if they studied and were paid to make themselves odious to heaven and earth, and were industriously calling for quick and signal vengeance from both. I bless God it hastens apace;—let us pray for its sudden completion.

NUMBER 93.

How boldly the Popish Clergy abuse their Followers, by teaching them to deny with a Curse, the most obvious Impieties of their Church.

I HAVE lately read a very seasonable pamphlet, of real use, good sense and knowledge, called, "An Inquiry how far Papists ought to be treated here as good Subjects, and how far they are chargeable with the tenets commonly imputed to them." It is written in answer to a Popish pamphlet, carefully distributed, full of glaring deceit, boldly denying all the detestable tenets and horrors of Popery ; and, still further to cheat the ignorant, denying them with a curse, as Peter did his master, and with the same sincerity. For example :

Cursed be he (says the Popish apologist) that commits idolatry, that prays to images or relics, or worships them, for gods. To this curse, and to all that follow, he makes his miserable votaries say, *Amen*.

This sounds strong, and is indeed strong fraud. Do not Papists adore relics ? Do they not openly worship images, and pray to saints ? as the author of the Inquiry clearly proves. Yes ; but it seems that this is no idolatry, for they do not worship them as gods ; that is, they do not call them God Jehovah, nor God the creator of all things ; they only invoke them as deputy deities, generally in the same high devotional strain : and such divine invocation, implying a divine prerogative to relieve and save the invoker, is a declaration of deity in the being invoked : it is therefore idolatry, when made to any being except the Supreme.

They ascribe godlike power to their most ridiculous relics, stocks and stones, old iron, bones, nails and hair, by making them work miracles, heal the sick, raise the dead, and exert the like acts and attributes of Omnipotence. Neither do they pray to their saints only as mediators and intercessors with God, as is sometimes pretended ; they pray to them directly, and for what none but the Godhead only can grant, all the blessings of this life and the next. This is all obvious in their Breviaries and Catechisms, where prayers are framed immediately to the saints, and in a stile as high and rapturous as to God himself, as is at length explained in the Inquiry.

This apologist pronounces another bold curse upon every goddess-worshipper, who believes the Virgin Mary to be more than a creature. I must own, that amongst all the extravagances of the Papists, I never knew a Papist deny that God created the Virgin Mary ; but I never heard of a Papist who did not treat her beyond the quality of a creature, and with all the awful epithets of a Deity. They all pray to her, they all worship her. Is such divine treatment due to any creature ?

But there follows a reserve that justifies all ;—Cursed is he who honours her, worships her, or puts his trust in her as much as in God. A curious come-off ! He makes his votaries own, that the omnipotent God is superior to one of his creatures ; but still they are to adore and invoke this human creature with the worship and language due only to God, her Creator. They implore her in form, "to deliver them from sin, to protect them from evil, and to receive them at the hour of

death." What could they ask more of their Maker? Is not all this treating her as a Deity, a sovereign Deity? Did the blindest heathens ever apply such strains of adoration to any of their deities, even to the highest of all, *Jupiter Optimus Maximus*!

The curse is, however, repeated upon him who believes her above her son, or that she can in any thing command him. Above her son, is an odd phrase, but hath its art and meaning here. It scurds as if they denied the idolatry of worshipping her as well as the Son. We know it to be idolatry to worship her at all, and we know that they worship her. This is enough to fix the charge upon them.—Or, that she can in any thing command him. If she can protect and pardon sinners, and receive their souls into eternal bliss, without him, she need not command him; she hath thus sufficient godlike power without him. But, if I am not mistaken, I have seen a Popish prayer, invoking the Virgin to command her Son, in terms, *impera filio tuo*: nor can such language appear strange in Popery.

The next curse is upon him who believes the angels and saints in heaven to be his redeemers, who prays to them as such, or who gives God's honour to them, or to any creature whatsoever. Was ever such mock defence! We do not charge them with believing saints and angels to be their redeemers, but with worshipping saints and angels: Nor can they deny that they do. It is the constant practice of their church, and it is enjoined by the authority of the church, to worship and invoke the angels, who are always in the presence of the Lord, and willingly watch for our security, which is committed to them. They are also ordered to invoke the dead saints, and to reverence their relics. All this is amply proved in the Inquiry.

'Tis a miserable subterfuge to say, that they reverence the Deity more, or, in their own words, that they do not give God's honour to them; and yet in reality, they do it, by putting them in God's stead, and complimenting them with God's power. Out of the vilest amongst dead men they choose their heavenly protectors and idols. The implacable traitor, Becket, had infinitely more worship and oblations paid him than all the host of heaven; not only than Jesus Christ, but even than the mother of Christ, though she was then infinitely more revered than the Deity. Indeed, for many centuries, consummate madness, or consummate villainy, was the chief recommendation to saintship; and the blackest character upon earth, the Roman Pontiffs presumed to furnish heaven with such rivals to the Deity, as were too infamous to live amongst men. It is certain, than many who had adorned gibbets, or deserved them, helped to swell the Roman Calendar, and were complimented with a seat on the right hand of God, with the title of his chief favourites and counsellors.

The pleasantest curse follows: *Cursed be he that worships any bread-en god, or makes gods of the empty elements of bread and wine.* A safe curse! Well may the framer of it make his true Catholic say *Amen* to it! Before it is consecrated 'tis not God; and he deserves to be cursed who will worship bare bread as God. After it is consecrated 'tis God, our blessed Saviour in person; and who can be cursed who worships our blessed Saviour?

This fallacy is too gross; but a gross imposture will bear no better. A wafer is no God; but a few words and grimaces of the priest make

it a god ; whilst, to taste and touch, and sight, and smell, 'tis still a wafer. Weigh it, dissect it, separate and examine its parts, 'tis a manifest composition of flour and water, just as it was before. But you are damned if you believe demonstration. These very particles of water and flour are, in spite of demonstration, changed in an instant, without the least alteration, into the whole body of Jesus ; and though there be but one Jesus, he is multiplied into millions every day.

At this rate a priest has power over God himself, and more power than God himself can have ; for God cannot reconcile contradictions, nor convert bread into flesh and blood, whilst it continues still to be bread. There never was such an impudent imposture in all the visions and chimeras of Paganism. The many transformations of visnum, god of the Indian bramins, into a fish, a hog, a lion, a bramin, a flying horse, are credible impossibilities, compared to transubstantiation, the highest affront to the eyes and reason of man, and the most shocking indignity to the Deity, ever offered or invented by the most daring impostors known amongst men.

The next curse is not more modest or sincere : — *Cursed is he that believes, that priests can forgive sins, whether the sinner repents or no ; or that any power in heaven or earth can forgive sins, without a hearty repentance, &c.*

A repenting sinner has satisfying assurance, from the word of God, that “ God forgives all who truly repent.” The Almighty does not add, that he wants the interposition of a priest. His mercy is not mock mercy, to be awakened or applied at the request of the priest ; the all seeing eye needs no voucher for the sincerity of the sinner's heart. When the framer of the curses denies, that any power in heaven or earth can forgive sins without repentance, he seems to put God upon the same foot with the priest, and disables him equally with the priest from bestowing mercy. Surely the Almighty can pardon, if he will, even the impenitent ; but a priest cannot pardon the penitent, already pardoned by God, who does not create souls to be the vassals of priests, less still their dupes and property.

If repentance opens heaven to sinners, as God himself has told us it does, all the use of a priest to a sinner, dying or living, is to exhort him to repent ; an office to be performed by any pious relation or friend. Yet, for asserting this truth in a Popish country, you would be burned alive in the inquisition. But such bloody cruelty is never to be owned in England, at least this is not the time ; therefore careful hypocrisy, and all false softenings, are to be employed.

I know not how this casuist can exempt the counsel of Trent from his curse. Those reverend faith makers have decreed absolution from a priest to be a judicial act, that is, final and peremptory. A most blasphemous decree ! divesting the Almighty of his prerogative, and conferring it upon a priest ; yet a decree naturally made by priests. The fathers of the counsel were chiefly the Pope's implements and registers ; and it was too truly said, that the Holy Ghost was, from time to time, conveyed from Rome to Trent in a portmantua.

This Popish advocate yields too much ; yet I doubt not but he knows what he does. A Popish dispensation to deceive Protestants is no new thing ; and I defy the ablest missionary to convert any sensible, well informed Protestant to Popery, without deceiving him. He

dare not tell all ; no, not to Papists. I doubt few Papists know that it is another decreed point and doctrine of the church of Rome, that, in performing the office of the sacrament, of any sacrament, the words and gestures and operations of the priests, however full and formal they be, yet are of none effect, without his intention accompanying them. No ; the most momentous ordinance of religion is invalid and none, unless the priest pleases to make it so, by intending it to be so.

As these sacraments, seven in number, are all necessary to salvation, and the priestly performance necessary to the sacrament, so is his intention and good pleasure necessary to make a sacrament ; and the eternal fate of immortal souls depends upon his caprice. An impious, or a revengeful priest (both very common characters) may damn his whole flock. Is not this representing the good God as a terrible tyrant to his creatures, and a confederate with cruel impostors ?

Thus high is the power of priests carried in that godless, that apostate church, where it is safer to be a traitor, a Sodomite, a poisoner, or an assassin, than to follow Christ and conscience, in opposition to fraud and idolatry. Yet a priest of that very church ventures, in this enlightened country, to represent the Romish priests as lambs, lovers of truth, and claiming no other privilege, no power, no offensive weapons. Even the Pope is a disinterested soul ; and cursed is he who believes that there is authority in the Pope to forgive sins, or to give leave to commit sins, for a sum of money. The Pope needs not pretend to it ; he has other pretences, even when money is the motive. Offenders submit, they beg pardon, and the money convinces him that they are sincere. There is a rate for sins according to the quality of each, fixed in the office of the *Rota* at Rome, where the most heinous and hideous are not excepted, even the murder of a parent, or the debauching of a sister.

This pecuniary traffic for sins is claimed and practised by the priests, under the soft title of commutations ; and why not by the highest of all priests, the sovereign Pontiff ? Whoever takes money to absolve sinners, gives them leave, nay encouragement, to commit sin ; and the Pope, for a round sum, given not to him, but to the church, though he fingers it all, grants indulgences for many generations : and because this is not called absolution nor forgiveness, but is only an exemption from perdition, and equally effectual with absolution, therefore this candid defender of Popery curses all who believe that the Pope claims authority to forgive sins for a sum of money ; or any priest to grant present absolution for future sins.

Mind what art and reserve in the expression, *present sins*, and *sins in time to come* ! Does not the Pope make a market of the sins and souls of men ? And do not the priests (his brokers, and their own) retale pardons, for a price, to sinners and their heirs ? What set the reformation on foot in Germany, but the scandalous traffic of indulgences, sold openly at Wittenberg by the Pope's infamous agents, the strolling friars, living in debauchery, practising all frauds and falsehoods to cheat people of their money, by such tempting baits as the Pope's intailable receipts for salvation ? They were sold in parcels to the best bidders, who, to make the most of their bargain, hired the popular preaching friars to extol their sublime excellency as infallible passports

to heaven, and to revile and frighten all who hesitated a moment to save their souls by so cheap a commodity.

The curses go on: "Cursed is he that contemns the word of God, or hides it from the people, on design to keep them from the knowledge of their duty, and to preserve them in ignorance and error."

"Here says the author of the Inquiry, is a most shameful account of the Papists hiding the Scriptures from the people. The question is, Why are the Scriptures kept at all from the people? The answer, continues he, is, that they do not so keep them for this or that particular purpose. It may be so; but you may have other purposes, other ends, other designs, all bad in themselves."—He then shews, "That the free use of the Bible is restrained from the people by the authority of the council of Trent, and the constitution of Pope Pius IV. and that the same restraint extends to every particular layman, without leave from the bishop or inquisitor; nor then without the advice of the minister or confessor, nor after all this, without a license in form; and whoever presumes to read or have the Bible without such licence cannot receive absolution of his sins, unless he first surrenders up his Bible to the ordinary."

After some lively and unanswerable expostulations, our Protestant author adds upon this head: "Now if for these, or for such like reasons, you do in fact hide the Scriptures from the people, is it not a most shameful chicanery, solemnly to curse those who hide them for other reasons?—A man charged for robbing on the highway, to clear himself, wishes that he may be hanged if ever he robbed on design to keep people from travelling such a particular road, or from travelling with money about them; but still he is a robber, which is what he is charged with."

In my next I shall continue the chase of this Romish fox, with the assistance of my Protestant coadjutor.

NUMBER 94.

The same Subject continued.

I PROCEED to examine the sincerity and good faith of the Catholic curses. I find them all worded with notable craft, to deceive the ignorant, but with equal assurance; since the deceit is obvious to every discerning reader, as the author of the Inquiry has demonstrated.

The tenth in order is, "Cursed is he that undervalues the word of God, or that, forsaking Scripture, chooses rather to follow human traditions than it." Whatever the Popish clergy do in this respect, 'tis not safe to own, that they esteem the traditions of men more highly than the word of God. If they value such traditions as highly as they do God's word, they slight and undervalue that word. The author of the Inquiry shews, that the council of Trent enjoins "these traditions to be received and revered with equal affection of filial piety with

the Scriptures of truth." Most of the Popish traditions are fabulous, many of them ridiculous, great part of them framed by priests, and enjoined by priestly authority for priestly ends ; few of them instructive, all precarious ; yet all revered by the Papists as much as Scripture.

It is cant to deny that they reverence traditions more than Scripture : that they do it at all is crime enough ; nor dare they plead *not guilty*. It is indeed much safer in their church, to neglect the Scripture, than their priestly traditions and impositions. Without being obliged to know, or suffered to know, one chapter in the Bible, 'tis dangerous (often capital) to omit or neglect the injunctions of their priests, though not one of them be found in the Bible. Penance, auricular confession, absolution, transubstantiation, infallibility, purgatory, the power of priests to damn and save, to open the gates of heaven and hell, are so many human and priestly devices, or rather frauds, to rule the world, and to cheat the creation : not one of them mentioned or meant in Scripture, yet all guarded with sword and fire ; and all who dare doubt or deny them, tortured and burnt in this world, and doomed to eternal burning in the next.

Then, as they command and practice openly what no Scripture commands, they notoriously slight and omit duties which the Scripture explicitly enjoins. Our Saviour commands, that " all should drink of the cup of his blood." In the Popish sacrament there is no cup, at least none for the people : the priest keeps all that to himself, as if he thought it enough for the laity to be half Christians. St. Paul makes it a mark of apostacy to forbid to marry. The Romish clergy are all forbid to marry. St. Paul makes it another mark of apostacy " to abstain from meats, which God has commanded to be received with thanksgiving." The Popish church forbids the use of meats for a great part of the year ; but, for money, permits you the use of them during the strictest fast in the year. The apostle condemns the worship of saints as a doctrine of devils. The Papists are more copious, more assiduous in their devotions to saints, than to all the three persons in the God-head.

The curse about the Ten Commandments is expressed in the same equivocal way. I shall take no further notice of it here, than that I wonder the commandments should at all be brought into it, since the second explicitly forbids what the Papists so grossly practise, the worship of images ; or (which is just the same thing) the worship of the persons represented by the images. Their poor people, always ignorant, only worship what they see ; and if they worshipped a saint or an angel in person, they would be still idolaters.

The small, but well meant craft in the next curse, is plain enough to be diverting.—" Cursed is he that preaches to the people in unknown tongues, such as they understand not ; or uses any other means to keep them in ignorance." Pray observe : nobody charges them with preaching in an unknown tongue ; the charge is, That they pray in an unknown tongue ; and the charge is true. They dare not deny it by the most elusive terms which they can invent. Their practice in it is in direct defiance of Scripture, which largely condemns it ; of common sense, which it affronts ; and of all the purposes of rational devotion, which it can never raise. Can there be any edification where

there is no knowledge? For aught the people know, the priest, in the mass, may be applying to Mahomet, or to Simon Magus. All that they hear from him is a doleful tone; all that they see in him is bowings, turnings, grimaces, and making mouths. By these tricks and accents he may amaze them and warm them, and so he might by the words of Petronius Arbiter, or any other profane strains, fanatically and wailingly pronounced.

Can there be greater impiety, or a higher insult upon true piety and the understandings of Christians, than thus daringly to debar them from the duty of praying for themselves and their own souls, yet to mock them with the appearance of doing it? Can there be more successful means used, by art and imposture, to keep the people in ignorance? *Fi, fa, fum*, or any other jargon, would be as edifying.

In the Romish Church, ignorance is allowed to be the mother of devotion; and 'tis carefully cultivated there, as the first foundation and elements of popular superstition, and of Papal tyranny, to which all religion, all reason and conscience, must be enslaved or sacrificed. In that church the instruction, the correction, the commands of the priests, are all authoritative and uncontrollable; to contradict him is heresy; heresy is death and damnation. Where profound ignorance is the mother of devotion, blind submission is naturally her daughter.

This last curse, equivocal as it is, I doubt involves the framer of it in it; nor can any thing but ignorance clear him of it; a plea which I doubt he cannot offer.

As the aim of this good Catholic is to conceal and deny all the real deformities and horrors of Popery, he would seem to deny the Pope's dispensing power: Cursed be he that believes that the Pope can give to any, upon any account whatsoever, dispensation to lie or swear falsely; or, that it is lawful for any, at the last hour, to protest himself innocent, in case he be guilty.

There is great boldness in this curse; for though the Pope must be a madman if he averred, in these unwary words, that he could encourage any man to swear falsely, and to lie, he notoriously claims a power to dispense with oaths, the most awful and important oaths, all oaths and engagements to princes and states, and all oaths and engagements from princes and states. For many centuries successively (in the dark ages, when the Papal power flourished most) hardly a year passed but his holiness discharged some sovereign from his oath to his people, or some people from their oath to their sovereign, as often as his wrath or his avarice prompted him; for one or other, or both, of these pious motives, generally swayed the holy father. He frequently tempted and incensed prince and people to violate laws and oaths, and to oppress one another. He particularly warranted the repeated perjuries of our Henry III. who was continually oppressing the nation, and as often frightened by the barons into oaths and concessions; then as readily discharged by the Pope from fulfilling them, but never without a competent price.

This practice was as common in most Catholic countries, as horrible in all. The Popes were for ever dispensing with laws, oaths, canons, and even with their own decrees; and they had a *non-obstante* to all engagements, secular and sacred, to God and man. Was not all this owning, as well as practising, dispensations to lie, and to swear

falsely ? “ It is as easy to grant a dispensation to sin for the future, as to absolve for sin that is past,” as the author of the Inquiry truly observes.

Cursed is he that believes it lawful for any, at the last hour, to protest himself innocent, in case he be guilty.

“ Aye, says the author of the Inquiry, or at any hour. But when a man is absolved from his guilt by a priest, is he then guilty ?”—When the priest has restored him to a state of innocence, he will think it just to assert his innocence.

All the other curses are excellently explained, and the drift and artifices of the framer fairly exposed, by the author of the Inquiry ; for there are several more curses that I have for that reason omitted. It is remarkable, that after the framer of the curses had denied or disguised the most shocking positions and practices of Popery, he yet adds the following and last curse : Cursed are we, if, in saying amen to any of these curses, we use any equivocation or mental reservation, or do not assent to them in the common and obvious sense of the words.

To all which I answer, *Lord have mercy upon us !* The full and particular answer to that, and to them all, I leave to the discerning Inquirer, who handles this last, as he has the rest, with proper discernment and strength.

I end where the Protestant author begins. He tells us, that this Popish performance is called, “ A vindication of the Roman Catholics, being their most solemn declaration of their utter abhorrence of the following tenets vulgarly laid to their charge.” And then follow the curses. He says, that it was first published in order to introduce Popery here, in the beginning of the reign of the late king James, of whose detestable government, blind Popish bigotry, and furious tyranny, I have lately given a short but true account. It was re-printed at London by the present Popish titular bishop of London, in the year 1743, when an invasion was designed against England in favour of the Pretender. “ It was again re-published at a time when a Popish prince was attempting to drive out a Protestant one ! a time when Popery was thought likely to get into power ! a time when Papists began to think themselves secure of gaining their ends.”

The professed purpose of this Popish pamphlet is to persuade Protestants that Papists merit equal protections as equally good subjects. Strange assurance, after all that Protestants have suffered from Papists ! Can Protestants ever forget the Popish fires and Protestant victims under queen Mary, with their incessant, perfidious, and bloody plots ever since, to restore Popery here ; the dreadful conspiracy to extirpate this whole Protestant state by gunpowder ; the Irish massacre, fomented by the Pope, and the Popish priests the keenest butchers in it ; the massacre of Paris, approved and hallowed by the Pope ; the daily butcheries in the inquisition ; no faith to be kept with Protestants ; all Protestants persecuted, robbed, starved, and slaughtered, in all Popish countries where Popish priests have any credit ; all Protestants extirpated in all countries where Popish priests have sway ; the spirit of Popery still the same, sanguinary and devouring ; the Popish emissaries ever busy, deluding and perverting the simple and credulous, daily making proselytes, every proselyte an enemy to their country, ready to turn against it, and zealous to destroy it ?

NUMBER 95.

The following Quotation is taken from one of the Political Discourses upon Sallust the Roman Historian : It is the Fourth Section of the Discourse, "Of the Mutability of Government." The Passage is extremely curious, and, I think, seasonable.

"THE settlement made by the Jesuits, upon the river Paraguay in America, is extremely remarkable. These good fathers, every where indefatigable in improving their apostolic talents, and turning souls into ecclesiastical traffic and power, began there, by drawing together into one fixed habitation, about fifty families of wandering Indians, whom they had persuaded to take their word implicitly for whatever they told them : for this is what they call conversion ; and is, indeed, the true art of making Catholics, who have no other ground for their faith, but the assertions of their priests.

"From this beginning, and such encouragement, the assiduous fathers, ranging the country, and dazzling the stupid savages with their shining beads, charming them with their pious tales and grimaces, their tuneful devotions and high professions, made such a harvest of converts as to form a commonwealth, or rather an empire of souls : for every convert is a subject most blindly obedient.

"The holy fathers, not fifty in number, are thus sovereigns of a noble country, larger than some kingdoms and better peopled. It is divided into several large districts, each of them governed by a single Jesuit, who is, as it were, a provincial prince ; but more powerful and revered, and better obeyed, than any European, or even any eastern monarch. His word is not only a law, but an oracle ; his nod infers supreme command : he is absolute lord of life and death, and property ; may inflict capital punishment for the lightest offence ; and is more dreaded, therefore more obeyed, than the Deity. His first ministers and officers, civil and military, are doomed by him to the meanest punishments, and whipped not only like common slaves, but like common felons : nor is this all their punishment, at least all their abasement, which to a man of spirit is the worst punishment. Whilst they are yet marked and mangled with the lash, they run (colonels and captains run) and kneel before their holy sovereign, condemn themselves for having incurred his pious displeasure, and humbly kissing his reverend sleeve, thank him for the fatherly honour he had done them, in correcting them like dogs.

"So much tameness and vassallage is part, and an important article, of their conversion. They are even pleased with their servitude, and care not what they do and suffer here, for the mighty treasures of joy and liberty which are insured to them hereafter by the good father, who gives them all that he has to give in the next world, and, by way of barter and amends, takes all that they have in the present.

"The poor Indians cultivate the ground, dig and plough, and reap and sow : they make stuffs, and other manufactures ; they rear fowls,

they breed cattle. they carry burdens, and labour hard above ground, as well as under it, where, in sweat and darkness, and in peril of perishing, they drudge in the mines. Yet, with all this industry, they earn nothing, nothing for themselves. All their earnings, all the profit and advantages, appertain not to them, but solely to the good father, their spiritual sovereign, who rewards them to the full with what costs him nothing ; blessings, and masses, and distant prospects. Their grain and manufactures are all carried into his warehouses, their cattle and fowls into his yards, their gold and silver into his treasury. They dare not wear a rag of their own spinning, nor taste a grain of their own sowing, nor a bit of meat of their own feeding, nor touch the metal of their own producing ; nor so much as an egg from the hens they rear. They themselves are fed and subsisted, from day to day, by a limited allowance, furnished them by the appointment, and at the mercy, of their great lord, a small priest.

“ Yet, under all these discouragements (which are none to them, who seem to have sacrificed their feeling, as well as their reason, to the sorcery of superstition) they are diligent and laborious to the last degree, and vie with one another for the high price and distinction bestowed by the father upon such as excel most in their work and industry, even the bewitching honour of kissing his sleeve. The second commandment in their table of duties is, *to fear the Jesuit, and obey him* : as the two next are much akin to it, and of the like tendency, even, *to study humility, and to contemn all worldly goods*. The precept, of fearing God, seems to be prefixed for form, and in policy only, since it is impossible there should be any knowledge of God where the exercise of reason is not known, nor permitted ; nor can God be said to be regarded by those who use the images of God like beasts.

“ All these stores and warehouses, so much grain, so many manufactures, so much gold and silver, so many commodities, from so fine, so large, and so plentiful a country, abounding in mines, in rivers, and meadows full of horses, and sheep, and black cattle, of timber and fruit-trees, of flax and indigo, hemp and cotton, sugar, drugs, and medicinal herbs, must enable these good fathers, who have renounced all wealth, and the world itself, to carry on an infinite and most lucrative trade, in which, though they have vowed poverty, they are extremely active, and consequently must make that Jesuitical government a most powerful one. It hath advantages which no other government ever had ; an absolute independency upon its people, or their purses ; the whole wealth of the country in its present possession ; the people absolutely submissive and resigned to its good pleasure, and all its calls ; no factions ; not a malecontent ; an army of sixty thousand men, all tame and tractable, devoted to blind obedience, commanded in chief by a Jesuit, and obstinately averse to be commanded by any other general ; a vast revenue of many millions : no trouble in taxing, no time lost in collecting taxes.

Such a government, whilst it proceeds upon the same principles, is unchangeable. No wonder these Jesuits are extremely jealous and tender, not only in keeping the poor Indians slaves to ignorance and bigotry, in order to keep them slaves to themselves ; but in concealing so much empire and wealth from all the world, especially from Spain.

from whence they were sent, at the expense of that crown, to convert the Indians, and make them subjects to the Spanish monarchy. The good fathers are so far from meaning any such thing, that they not only carefully avoid teaching them the Spanish tongue, but press it upon them as a point of conscience, not to converse with the Spaniards. If any Spaniard happens to come amongst them (a thing which the Jesuits are so far from encouraging, that they care not to see it) he is indeed civilly used, but carefully confined within the walls of their holy citadel, the Presbytery ; or if, by earnest intreaty, he obtain leave to walk through the town, he is closely guarded by the Jesuit at his side, and sees not an Indian in the streets ; for the Indians are ordered to shut themselves up, and fasten their doors, upon any such occasion.

Besides, these vigilant fathers keep five or six thousand men, employed in several detachments (apostolic troops !) to watch and scour the frontiers, in order to cut off all intercourse with the neighbouring countries, not yet subjected to the good fathers. Towards one of their frontiers particularly, lest the rich mines in it might invite a settlement from abroad, they have destroyed all the horses, in order to discourage any such settlement. For these self denying friars, who are sworn to poverty, have an ardent zeal to secure all these wealthy mines to themselves for religious uses.

These poor, rich, humble, sovereign missionaries, as they are masters of such immense wealth, all consecrated to their own use, that is, to the use of religion, make a proper display of it. The churches are spacious, magnificent in their structure, and set off with all pomp and decorations, grand porticoes and colonnades, rich altars, adorned with bas reliefs, pictures in frames of massy gold, and saints of solid silver, the foot and sides covered with cloth of gold, and the pedestals with plates of gold ; the tabernacle made of gold ; the pyx or box for the sacrament, of gold, set round with emeralds and other jewels ; the vessels and candlesticks made of gold ; the whole, when illuminated, making a show almost beyond belief. A proper bait for the eyes of deluded Indians, who, by such fine sights, and the pious mountebankry attending them, are retained in due awe and wonder !

The princely person of the poor Jesuit is suitably lodged in a spacious palace, containing grand apartments, furnished with many pictures and images, with proper lodgings for his train of officers and domestics ; the quadrangles and gardens all in proportion ; the whole court making a square of some miles. Observe, that all the many opulent warehouses belonging to the holy disinterested man are contained in it.

Such is the situation, such the state and inimitable authority, of every Jesuit in Paraguay. There are but forty odd of these monks in all that great tract of country, and in it they have above a million of souls, not only to obey them, but to worship them ; nor do these, their sightless and abject slaves, know any other God : for where the true God is ever so little known, no man will worship friars, who always paint him as like themselves, as they themselves are, in reality, unlike him."

NUMBER 96.

The Quaker's Advice to the young Pretender.

YOUNG MAN,

THY venturing thyself into Britain hath produced a discovery, which ought to wound thee with sore remorse ; namely, that however sorry and wretched the friends whom thou hast picked up in Scotland are, even barbarous Highlanders, strangers to humanity and our language, enemies to our religion and laws ; yet thou hast no better friends in England, none who are blessed either with religion, or with property, or with sense. Neither canst thou wonder at it. Thou art an outlaw, and canst hope no sincere assistance but from such as are as desperate as thyself. Whoever joins with thee, or stands up for thee, by doing so forfeits all he hath, whether thou dost miscarry or succeed. If thou failest, he is forfeited and hanged : if thou carriest thy point, all that he hath is thine, or at thy mercy. For whether thou becomest master by force or by claim of inheritance, it will be equally treasonable to contend with thee, when thou art master. Thou needest only sanctify thy usurpation with the profane colour of divine right, and then all thy violence is law.

All the laws in being are against thee. Canst thou give us any satisfying reason, why all our laws, and with them our conscience, our Bible and our property, should be sacrificed to thy will ? What is it to us that thou callest thy name Stuart ? A name that will gain thee no man that was not bewitched to thee before, by desperate superstition, or desperate ambition, or a desperate fortune.

Under thy pretended grandfather, (to go no further back) we had a struggle for our all ; and by God's blessing and the assistance of William the valiant prince of Orange, our struggle was successful ; as we trust, in God, our present struggle will be. God hath blessed us with another William ; we trust another deliverer, a hero and a Protestant, like his renowned namesake ; a youth inured to dangers and battles, and ennobled by them ; the champion of freemen, the scourge of rebels, the terror of France, and thy terror. Thou flyest before him, thou and the desperate host : we firmly hope that thy flight will soon be final. We have now, as we had then, the zealous concurrence of all ranks of Protestants, Churchmen and Dissenters. Nor do we fear the power and malice of the Papists, thy only unchangeable friends, and our unchangeable enemies. Thou hast no arguments to offer but thy will, and thy sword : and this was thy pretended grandfather's best argument. The defence of our religion and our laws (the only glory of a king and his only support) was so far from his heart, that though he promised and swore to preserve both inviolably, he openly strove to extirpate one and to abolish the other.

What canst thou promise that he did not swear ? And what were his oaths and all his engagements to his Protestant subjects, but snares laid to lull them fast asleep, and then to destroy them before they were thoroughly awake ? His mad and ungodly zeal hurried him too fast. He would not allow his people sufficient time to be well deceived. His

sacred oaths were violated almost as soon as made. Verily, he broke some parts of his oath before he took it, by seizing the revenues to be settled by Parliament before the Parliament had granted them ; and then asked the Parliament to grant him what he had seized. His blind bigotry to Popery (as bigotry is always without bounds in a narrow genius) made the Protestant faith, as well as the English councils, odious to him. He was blindly led by the Jesuits, and other emissaries from Rome, particularly by an idolatrous woman of that communion, his Italian wife. His whole conduct was such, so perfidious, so precipitate and arbitrary, that whoever is not for ever warned by it against Popery in their princes, and against a Popish prince on the English throne, will never take any warning, never be a real Englishman.

Thou canst not deceive us with thy promises ; we shall not trust thee even upon thy oath. We know how Papists reason, and how easily Popish priests can absolve Popish princes. No oath must be kept that mars the Catholic faith, and Catholic tyranny. Neither canst thou convince any reasonable man, that ever Popery prevailed without tyranny, or that any tyranny was complete without Popery in any state called Christian : nor canst thou prove, that ever any Popish prince kept faith with a Protestant people.

But thou hast indeed in fact dispensed with thyself from imposing upon us, by any artful faithless engagements in form, to maintain our rights ; whether from thy own modesty, that thou wilt not profess what thou art far from intending ; or that thy priests do not think it good policy to seek by fair means, what they hope, and perhaps make thee hope, to gain for thee and themselves by a strong hand. Thou didst therefore mock the people of Glasgow, with notable bitterness, when in defence of the demands of thy wild mountain men, sent to rob them of a great sum, thou toldest them, “ Thou wouldest maintain them in all their rights ; ” when in fact thou wast convincing them that they had none. The good people of Scotland may say the same thing to thee, and yet drive thee out of their country the day after. Had not the men of Glasgow a right to their own money ? Pray what right hadst thou to it, besides the great swords of thy half naked Highlanders, who make no distinction between robbery and right, and are therefore proper defenders of thine ?

Thy mockery of poor men in distress was still more bitter, when thou didst acquaint the forlorn inhabitants of that city (trembling with the daggers of savages at their throats) with what great success thou hadst had, and “ how it became them to be glad, that thou hadst had so much.” As thou wast stripping them with an unfeeling heart (for heretics deserve no pity) couldst thou thus banter them too with an unmoved countenance ? Whatever thou didst mean, or howsoever thou didst look, thy whole conduct, and thy words, on this occasion, furnish an instructive lesson to every Briton, and will, I hope, make as deep and proper impressions upon all Britons, as they did, and do, and still shall upon me.

Young man, I pray thee, who sent for thee, and what didst thou come for ? That thou comest in the name of thy father may be a plea in the mouth of a child ; but instead of an argument for thee, rather excites an alarm against thee. Thy father is a name of contempt and aversion to Protestants and Englishmen ; and none but the ungodly,

and unenlightened dwellers upon the mountains, have invited thee, or stood by thee; sons of Belial and of blood, chosen to support thy reign by committing universal plunder, and cutting throats. Or if France and Spain and Rome espouse thy cause, can it be any other than the cause of Babylon and of anti-christ? Canst thou conceive a cause more odious, more execrable and alarming to the ears of Englishmen and Protestants?

What comest thou for? Is it to restore thy father to what he never had, a crown? Thy father is debarred from the crown; and common fame says is as much unqualified as disqualified for it. And how well qualified thou art, let the laws declare, together with thy lawless intrusion, and the barbarian rule exercised by thee and thy savages in Scotland. We know of no restoring in England but what we dread to see restored, Popery and slavery. Is it because thy pretended grandfather attempted to establish both, that thy father pretends to succeed him? Thy true errand is, to abolish our dear and sacred birthright, the matchless blessings of liberty, with all the laws that secure these heavenly blessings, as also the illustrious Protestant king, who secures all these laws. The laws are the rule of his reign; as veracity and magnanimity are the rules of his life. He never, in one instance, deceived his subjects; never wronged, never defrauded, much less oppressed, one single subject. His heart is too manly to be false. He abhors Popery, as it promotes contradiction and falsehood, and inspires cruelty and deceit, with perjury and tyranny, the true marks of the beast and her followers!

What thinkest thou of thy pretended grandfather? What thinkest thou of thy father and thyself, and of what thou art now doing and pursuing? Was the reign of king James any more like the reign of king George, than insolent and merciless oppression is like fatherly protection; than mean deceit (very mean in a king) is like princely sincerity and the open spirit of a man; or than diabolical perjury is like the pious and heroic adherence of our great king to faith and oaths?

How dost thou like this explanation and true comparison? What is in thy father to recommend him to Englishmen and Protestants? Is it the blood of thy pretended grandfather? This is a distinction that would do him or thee but little good: none but enthusiasts regard it: we true Protestants and Englishmen disown it. I doubt many despise it. Dost thou hope to bring it into esteem, and with it thy Popery and thy murdering robbers, half-clad Highlanders, in spotted blankets?

Whatever name thou dost assume, thou art an usurper: whatever title thou dost claim, thou hast in reality none but violence. Thy success must be our destruction.—With what face canst thou desire a free people to be slaves to an outlaw and an exile? The laws, the laws of God and man, are on our side: by these laws thou art a criminal condemned. Thou art indeed a desperate adventurer. All thy way is paved with guilt and danger. Dost thou set up thyself, or the phantom thy father, both strangers, both outlaws, against the peace and felicity of three great kingdoms? Must he or thou reign, though they perish; as surely they must, if either of you do? This argues a desperate spirit. It is bidding defiance to the living God: it is denouncing perdition to his creatures.

Whenever this nation hath wanted a king, they have chosen a king.

William the Third ; the late king George ; and this king George, came all to the throne by the invitation and authority of Parliament. These kings we know ; but, what art thou ? Surely not a king, but a very strange character, a wanderer and a robber, attempting to seize a kingdom. Thy abettors and followers suit thy person and fortune. Any one of them, though unable to read thy assumed title, might, with equal pretences, produce a longer genealogy for himself than thine, and as sounding. For, according to thy example and demand, every man that ~~can~~ may rob and master human society.

I bless God, we want not a king : If we did, we should never chuse nor admit thee. I bless God, we have a good and a gracious king, a just and a brave king. Is it likely, that we shall change him for one descended from thy pretended grandfather ? So thou mayest depart. God bless king George ; God bless and multiply his race ; God protect his family and these nations, and blast the hopes of all pretenders, with the devices of all Papists, at home and abroad.

O young man ! this is the warm and devout prayer (however thou mayest dislike it) of thy upright monitor,

A true Englishman, and

A plain Christian, stiled

A QUAKER.

NUMBER 97.

The intimate Resemblance between the Popish Clergy; and those of modern Paganism in the East.

THE learned Dr. Middleton hath, with unanswerable strength and clearness, demonstrated at large the conformity of Popery to ancient Paganism. I shall here show the intimate resemblance between the Popish clergy and those of modern Paganism in the east ; and I shall take my proofs from Popish authors only, even the eastern missionaries, authors highly esteemed, and their works highly approved by the Romish church.

The Bonzes, Lamas, Talapois, are much the same sort of priests with different names in different countries in the east ; Bonzes in Japan and China, Lamas in Tartary, Talapois in Siam. They profess to adore two divinities, Fo and Omito, father and son, and hold, that the invocation of these two is sufficient to expiate all crimes the most enormous, and to procure their votaries a happy regeneration, or renascence according to their notions of transmigration.

They have a table of five very laudable moral precepts, or commandments : First, To do no murder. Secondly, Not to commit adultery. Thirdly, Not to covet. Fourthly, Not to bear false witness. Fifthly, Not to practise intemperance. But above all, they recommend

alms deeds, especially to themselves ; and preach up the duty of furnishing the priests with wealth and all things ; of obeying them in all things ; and of building them temples ; “ Since (they allege) that it is by their prayers, and by the penance which they impose, that you are redeemed from eternal torments.”

What unlimited power must not such revered impostors gain over their blind followers ? The soul of a man they hold goes, when he dies, into some other creature, a better or a worse, according to his merit or defaults ; and this character of him depends upon the word and pleasure of the priests.

A Pagan, who thought himself dying, sent for a Romish missionary. “ Father, says the poor man, the Bonzes, who know perfectly what passes in the other world, and our lot after death, assure me, that as I lived a pensioner upon the emperor’s bounty, I shall be transformed at my death into a post horse, to carry his dispatches into the provinces. They exhort me therefore to beware of starting and stumbling, biting and kicking ; but to be obedient and submissive, to run cheerfully, and to eat sparingly. Thus, they say, I shall earn the compassion of the gods, who often bring a man of quality, and a great mandarin, out of a dumb beast. Now, father, my next state startles me, and I dread the thought. In my sleep I find myself already saddled, trembling, and ready to fly at the first lash of the post boy ; I wake in sweat and horror, and continue to fancy myself a horse. I am told, father, that in your religion there is more tenderness, that by it men in this world continue men in t’other ; and I would rather be a Christian than a beast.”

It is father Le Comte who tells this story, without seeing the obvious analogy between the Bonzes of China and the Bonzes of Rome. Father Du Halde, who repeats it from him, as little sees how naturally his own reflections upon these eastern cheats return upon the cheats of his own order, and upon all the orders of his church. “ It is manifest, says he, that if the Chinese be thus bubbles, and the believers of a doctrine so absurd and ridiculous, as that of the metempsychosis ; the Bonzes, who so zealously spread it, derive no small advantage from it. It marvellously supports all the rogueries which they employ to extort alms gifts, and to swell their revenues. As they come from the lowest populace, and are inured from their infancy to an idle profession, they find that this doctrine warrants all the tricks and frauds which they practise to excite the liberality of the people.”

What a true picture of the Popish monks ! This lying doctrine, and all the knavish devices of the Bonzes, however copious, impudent and lucrative, are barren, impotent and modest, compared to purgatory, transubstantiation ; the penances, absolutions, and all the infinite and incredible rogueries of the Pope and the other Romish Bonzes. Those in the east must be owned to be tolerable proficient in all the arts of pious knavery, their intrusion into courts, their flatteries to great men, their cajoleries to weak women ; their gravity, hypocrisy and eternal avarice ; nightly devotions, austerities, fastings, and mortifications ; their pilgrimages ; the magnificence and decorations of their temples ; their many postures, genuflections and prostrations ; their incense, perfumes, and wax candles ; their idols, pictures and endless repetitions : for in all these tricks they abound, as those of Rome do. But in all these

grimaces and efforts of fraud, though full and fond of them, they are but babes to their elder brothers of Rome.

Almost all spiritual rogueries do, in many instances, resemble one another. Even in China you would take yourself to be in Spain or Portugal. Such a common sameness you find in the devotion of the eastern Bonzes and the European monks, and in the credulity of the people, Catholic or Pagan. You see these solemn drolls, the Bonzes, scourging themselves with rods, slashing themselves with knives in the streets, dragging heavy iron chains; battering their naked bodies with rough stones; stopping at every door and canting:—"All this we suffer for the expiation of your sins! Can you refuse us moderate alms."

The same Le Comte says, he saw "a young Bonze, of a very genteel air, and of a proper address to deceive the crowd, in the middle of a town shut in and standing upright, in a close chair, driven thick all round with long iron nails, the sharp ends inward; so that he could no way lean against it without a thousand wounds. Two fellows whom he had hired, carried him from door to door; and at every door he made his speech: 'You see me thus inclosed and tortured for the good of your souls: nor will I ever relinquish this my prison, 'till you have bought all these my nails. Each nail will cost but six-pence; a small price for such a treasure of benedictions as it brings! In purchasing them you will do an act of heavenly merit, not to us the Bonzes, but to the God Fo, to whose honour we Bonzes are building a temple.'"

Observe that the holy penitent had above two thousand of these nails to sell. By this precious commodity, though he lost some blood, he got money, with the odour of sanctity, perhaps more mistresses, and notable credit with his order, as well as to it.

The nails had certainly an intrinsic value, however far short of their religious value. But how superior is the intrinsic value of a thousand masses; and who but priests can retail them for a single farthing? Do not the Popish priests likewise turn into ready money all the supererogatory merit and sufferings of their saints and confessors? According to their doctrine and marketing, all rigid disciplinarians and martyrs are so many new redeemers of souls, and so many benefactors to the monks, who turn their blood and penance into ready cash.

Let them produce what instances of superstition they can (be the same ever so extravagant, ever so scandalous and blasphemous) from the fouleries and frauds of the Pagans, the most idolatrous Pagans, and of all the Pagan priesthood; the whole will come infinitely short of their own. And as to priestly tyranny, cruelty and national havoc, Popery has committed more in a day than Paganism in a thousand years. All the roguery and rapine of the Bonzes have not visibly lessened the mighty numbers of people in China; numbers, perhaps, equal to all those upon the rest of the globe.

America, which, though called but a quarter of the world, is almost a half, swarmed once in many parts of it with inhabitants, but is now nigh desolate, many of its best regions utterly desolate, rendered so by Catholic cruelty. Spain, by the expulsion of the industrious Moors, some millions, first and last, and by the daily butcheries of the inquisition for some centuries, has long found a very natural return of begga-

ry and dismal solitude, instead of multitudes and plenty ; many of her fertile plains as desert as her most barren mountains ; and nothing prospering but priests, who mar and damp, and banish all prosperity, and blast all the blessings of nature, as they thwart and curse all the wisdom and virtue of man. In France, and all over Christendom, their outrages, devastations, their anti-christian spirit and boundless cruelties, are sadly remembered and felt.

As to the lewd arts and debaucheries of the Bonzes with women, and one another, their monasteries, and their tricks to maintain them ; their hermitages and priestly retreats ; their hard-hearted unconcern for all the rest of the world, even for parents and relations : all these, the common curses of priestcraft every where, are still more visible in the Popish countries of Europe, more prevalent and more pernicious.

The Popish missionaries in the east mention with horror the use which libertines, priests, and other fanatics, make of the doctrine of transmigration, in order to commit whoredom and self-murder. Such a one need only represent to a young nymph, tender of her person, and loth to prostitute it, that her body is hardly any part of her, at least the meanest part, a transient covering and vehicle, soon of itself to perish, the slave and off-cast of the soul, and not to be regarded : and having thus taught her to despise her person, he enjoys it. If she still refuse, he has another argument, " That in her last state she had promised him to be his, and then, by dying, deprived him of his right ;" which he therefore claims, and often regains in her present state.

No doubt such craft and lewdness are abominable, but not peculiar to the eastern Bonzes. Many debaucheries, more hideous, have been practised by our Romish Bonzes, and by artifices as impious ; all under the cloke of religion : witness father Girard, confessor and spiritual director to Mademoiselle Cadiere, famous as he is for making a bawd of devotion to debauch her person, and turning her frantic spiritual raptures into raptures of real carnality. Any lewd priest having the blind guidance of a fine lady's conscience, may too easily guide her into his own arms.

Neither were the ancient Pagan priests the only sacerdotal procurers for the god of their temple, or the only ones who gratified their own infamous passion, by pretending to carry a lovely lady to the embraces of the idol. It is no more than what the Romish priests have done, under the name and pretended demand of some popular saint. And when a blessed saint condescended to visit a charming she-votary, long his passionate adorer, could she help being transported with so heavenly a favour, or be either incredulous or unthankful to the holy instrument who managed the amour and procured it ?

Jetzer, a visionary monk in Swisserland, just before the reformation, was visited, as he for some time verily believed, by the Virgin Mary in person, in all her glory, attended by angels. The awful but fond apparition, gave him several wonderful marks of distinction, and even promised him every favour but the last. Some of these favours seemed too painful and butcherly to come from the queen of heaven, and by cruelty piercing his feet and hands with a knife (in order to honour him with our Saviour's wounds upon the cross) the poor deluded dolt, after several visits, much suffering, and long belief, was at last un-

deceived, and discovered the supposed virgin speaking in the voice of the sub-prior, the contriver and chief manager of the infernal cheat, though the whole convent was engaged in it. The contrivers had all formally renounced God under their hands, in order to learn sorcery. To prevent all inquiry, they several times gave their poor victim poison, without success. The holy reprobates were soon after burned at the stake.*

It is observable, that this diabolical plot was framed out of a pious zeal to advance the glory and interest of the holy order : and the general of the order, who had laboured in vain to prevent the discovery of the sacred villainy, was supposed to have died broken hearted, or by his own hands, because the discovery was made, and the atheistical zealots executed.

As to the austerities which cost some of the crazy Bonzes and their as crazy followers their lives, for which the missionaries charge them with promoting self-murder ; the charge comes with great impropriety and want of modesty from them. The Romish church has produced many such self-murders (I wish that she had never produced any other :) many of her votaries have emaciated, starved, and even destroyed themselves with the mad rigour of penance.

Her policy is such, that whilst she indulges the most voluptuous and licentious in all their excesses (for a proper consideration !) she encourages the most shocking austerities, even the incredible ones of La Trappe, where the miserable devotees daily accelerate their own death. Such saint-like men bring her credit : debauched men bring her money : and whatever men suffer, however they sin, she thrives by the great blessings of wealth, and fraud, and tyranny.

NUMBER 98.

Of the many good Sermons preached and published against the Rebellion. A sermon of singular Tendency, by an eminent Hand: The strange Doctrines advanced, and the observable Omissions, in it.

SECT. I.

AMONGST the many good sermons (some of them excellent ones) published upon the present conjuncture, I have seen one from an eminent hand, which would serve upon any public conjuncture, and expose the author to no hazard, whatsoever the issue happened to be. He leaves others to rouse and alarm, to inflame the heart, to paint the horrors of Popery and tyranny, and to defy all the patrons and powers of either. He deals chiefly in generals, about the vices and apostacy

* The whole story is well told by bishop Burnet in his travels. He extracted it from the record of the process, still kept at Bern, and signed by the notaries of the delegates appointed by the Pope to try the friars.

of the Jews, the calamities following the same, and the warning we should take from thence.

He likewise enters into our own history ; gives us examples of our own happy escapes by the kind interpositions of Providence, in the midst of surrounding dangers ; and says as much of our present danger as became a prudent preacher, unwilling to lose old friends, or to make new enemies. Perhaps his performance might have been stronger and less guarded, had he postponed it till the rebellion had been extinguished : a precaution which a renowned doctor took during the former rebellion thirty years ago. After the rebellion was over he published a good Sermon against rebellion, and by it merited his first dignity in the church.

He calls upon us to bear our testimony against prevailing corruptions. — But if we grow careless and indifferent, — and suffer a spirit of irreligion to prevail over the nation, we forfeit our title to God's protection. He mentions with detestation the blasphemy, which, he says, has swarmed from the press, and names a burlesque upon the Christian hymn, called the Te Deum. It was, indeed, a licentious and scurrilous libel. But as it was a weak and wild production, I think it below the dignity of the pulpit to mention it, especially with such pompous abhorrence. Are all men to expect divine judgments for what all men condemn ? Is the wise God to afflict a whole people, because a libertine poet writes a licentious ode ?

When he represents blasphemy as swarming from the press, and only quotes a rash rhapsody, universally condemned, as much as the writer of it was pited ; the terrors which he had raised, vanish in consolation from the probable hopes that he can quote no more, or none so terrible.

What other productions from the press he means, I know not. Sure he is too candid to mean all that offend the hot men and bigots amongst the clergy, who are apt to blacken the best, when the best thwart them. I have seen bitter invectives from many of them, some of them of name and distinction, against the fairest reasoning, against Christian charity and moderation ; against all men who differed from them in their most narrow conceits, and most interested schemes. Locke has been reviled as a Socinian, for his noble attempts to improve human reason, and even for shewing the reasonableness of Christianity ; Tillotson as an atheist, for his rational divinity ; Hoadly as a Presbyterian, for supporting the established Episcopal church upon the principles of the constitution. All these, and many more, have been mercilessly used only for their eminent merit, for their calm tempers, their charitable principles, and their invincible reasoning.

The preacher knew, that the most opprobrious names, even those of atheist and blasphemer, are often no more than names of abuse, scolding terms, thrown at random, often falsely, by angry bigots, sometimes by grave impostors, upon men who love truth, and therefore seek it and defend it, for its own sake only, without other view, claim or reward. By-words and prejudices govern the many of all conditions. Credulity passes for conformity, antipathy for zeal. The fox hunter (a high churchman) in one of Mr. Addison's freeholders, boasts how happy they were in the country, for that they had not a Presbyterian in it, except the bishop ; and how popular, a keen span-

iel of his was amongst the country gentlemen, for having once almost worried a dissenting teacher.

Never was man more scurrilously and more bitterly treated by passionate divines, than that great ornament to his profession, that divine reasoner, Mr. Chillingworth. His arguments were stiled subtle atheism ; his defence of reason declared worse than Popery, at least as bad ; “ For what advantage would it be to the Protestant cause, were the Pope deposed from his infallible chair, if reason be enthroned in it ? ” says Dr. Cheynell : “ This, said he, will only serve to advance Socinianism.”

Chillingworth had other revilers without number : but Cheynell was the most remarkable. He was personally kind to him, yet refused to bury him, but eagerly buried his book.

When the preacher quotes one blasphemous performance, yet talks of others, he leaves his hearers and readers to guess what they are ; and they who have heard very good ones, nay the best railed at by men whom they implicitly believe, will fix the imputation there. Books that expose ecclesiastical craft and encroachment, which are surely as mischievous weeds as ever choaked the field of the gospel, are vehemently decried by weak or designing men, and treated as furiously as ever Chillingworth's books were treated. And as men have been often reviled as atheists for defending God's truth against impostors ; the nation has been threatened with God's wrath for encouraging such truth.

Liberty will always be abused most, where it abounds most. But no abuse of it can atone for its loss. Reason and true religion will always gain by liberty, and be able to defend themselves against all attacks : folly, virulence and scurrility, when discharged against them, will only serve to shew their strength and beauty : even blasphemy will appear more detestable, when examined by reason. They who admire the Te Deum most, saw the burlesque of it with the most indignation ; and any one will see, by comparing them, the impotence as well as impiety of the attempt.

Are we to bear our testimony against prevailing corruptions, and to see none amongst the clergy ? The preacher is silent upon this head. Is it not a great corruption, this which I have mentioned, the virulent behaviour of some of them (I fear I might say many of them) towards such as differ from them, even in matters of conscience, and such as blame and would amend the most unwarrantable parts of their conduct ? How barbarously have they used the advocates for toleration and diffusive Christian charity ? Strange unchristian proceedings ! By defending the most indefensible things, persecution, secular pride and power in spiritual hands (the constant curse and bane of religion in all ages, the parent of the inquisition, and even of Popery) they forfeited the character of Christian teachers ; and by debasing religion into party, were justly considered, not as preachers of Christ, but of faction. Could there be a worse spirit, or greater corruption ? And could the preacher inadvertently omit them ? Could he conceive them to be the less provoking to God, because they came from the clergy ?

Was it not natural, at least was it not just, in the preacher, when he was complaining of public corruptions, to have inquired into those of his own order, whether many of them be not slack in the performance of

their duty ; many too indifferent about it ; many of them performing none ; yet all zealous to claim dignity from their cloth, and divine respect to their persons, though nothing divine appear in their practice ! Not a word of non-residence ! Is not non-residence a very crying corruption, yet what more common ; to undertake the care, that is, the salvation of souls, to be paid for it, often greatly paid, to answer to God for it ; yet transfer that interesting, that awful trust to another, discouraged by small wages not to perform it ?

Is this a way to prevent the growth of Popery (of which the preacher complains) or to procure reverence to Churchmen ? Is this an expedient to prevent the growth of irreligion, if there be any teachers of religion, who convert religion into commerce, and prostitute a sacred trust to worldly ends, to voluptuousness, avarice, strife ? These are they who make unbelievers. The want of respect to such irreligious teachers will never pass for irreligion with any man, who has religion or common sense. And it is too common a practice for clergymen, who exercise the least religion, to complain loudest of the want of it in others. Or, is it not rather artifice, to hide such want in themselves ?

I dwell no longer here upon the great corruption of non-residence, so introductive to all other corruptions, especially to all corruptions in religion and good morals, and consequently the greatest that affect and ruin human society. Let me observe to the candid Christian reader, that our preacher, who puts on such concern for religion, and against irreligion, says not a syllable about this prevailing, this irreligious custom, much less against it. So far is he from raising any alarm, or apprehending divine judgments for such unhallowed neglect of divine duties, neglect so affrontful to God, and pernicious to man.

His censure of the errors and faults of the clergy would have appeared candid, after he had been praising them for their defence of the doctrines of the reformation in king James' time. And it would have looked equally candid in him, had he owned the heat and persecuting spirit of the clergy before and after the revolution, with their mad partiality to a Popish successor, and their having helped him to destroy the nation and themselves. As it did the clergy honour at home and abroad to have behaved like Englishmen in king James' time, it would have been for the credit of the preacher, had he owned their great weakness and iniquity in having flattered that king and his brother, in their worst and most unprotestant measures, and sanctified all their lawless, ungodly doings. Threatening and godless flattery ! Big with terrible consequences, almost fatal to the nation, surely more interesting to us, in this generation, than the backsliding of the Jews some thousand years ago !

What he says about the Jews is as foreign to us as their constitution and government were to ours. They worshipped idols, graven images, and strange gods, and thus provoked the true God. These are not the sins of Englishmen, at least of those who adhere to our present English government ; and I hope the nation in general will not be doomed to the heavy judgments of a just God, for the idolatry of Papists, and the rebellion of apostate Protestants.

The preacher therefore in vain rouses terror from false objects. An honest and well-affected citizen of London, of Edinburgh, of Carlisle, or of Sarum, or any where, I hope, is not threatened with divine judgment, because the ruffians in the Highlands have renounced God and

the king. This would be strange divinity. I wish it were less urged. It can serve no interest but the interest of craft, or of enthusiasm. And generally, from one or other of these motives, the awful, the inscrutable judgments of God are boldly denounced and applied. This rashness, indeed impiety, has been often exposed, and always will be, as often as 'tis attacked, yet is always confidently resumed by demagogues, fanatics and craftsmen.

The nonjurors have been threatening the nation with divine judgments, ever since the revolution. The people and clergy are by them declared to be in a state of schism and damnation; the kingdom under an usurpation, and both king and subjects intitled to God's avenging wrath. A doom particularly denounced by Dr. Brett, whose Popish doctrine of authoritative absolution, was moved to be approved by the convocation in a late reign, and no censure passed upon the motion. I know not that our preacher was then a member of it. He was certainly one soon afterwards, one of the zealous committee for censuring and misrepresenting that truly Protestant and Christian sermon of bishop Hoadly, defending Christ's own doctrine, that "His kingdom is not of this world." Not a word from that pious synod against the nonjurors clergy, nor against the other incendiary preachers, who raised the former rebellion; so far from threatening them with judgments!

One comfort, however, the preacher finds in the general aversion of the nation to Popery, but a comfort that hath an abatement in it, namely, "That a fear of Popery is not always a concern for the purity of the gospel, but a fear merely of the powers of a Popish church." Strange reasoning in an Englishman, and a Protestant preacher! Whatever sincere Protestant knows Popery, must fear it; whoever fears it, will oppose it. Whoever opposes Popery, serves the interest of the gospel, and of liberty, and consequently serves his country, both in its spiritual and temporal interests. What would the preacher have more? Can he himself do more? Or ought he to mistrust the intentions of any man in serving so just, so divine a cause? How would he like to be charged with a bad design, or with an hypocritical meaning, in this or any other of his pious labours? Does not he himself fear Popery? So much the greater cause have his readers to fear it. As Cato pertinently said to Cæsar, in relation to Cataline's conspiracy, which Cæsar secretly encouraged, yet publicly railed at the conspirators, whilst he was striving to save them from capital punishment, by artfully transferring the present dread of the senators upon other objects.

If Popery be the bane of the gospel, as I think it is; he who assaults Popery is an instrument to restore the purity of the gospel. Popery is worse than no religion, as our best divines allow and assert; and its bitler, unsociable, burning, damning spirit, is pernicious to all religion, to reason, peace, and mercy. Ought not religion, ought not reason and humanity all justly to fear, what they all have cause to abhor, and what destroys them all, the power of a Popish church? And can there be higher merit than exposing and crushing the most dreadful devices and engines of human misery?

The preacher seems fond of this unfair, inconclusive reasoning, and adds, that "those who have the least religion, have reason to be apprehensive of ecclesiastical courts and inquisitions, under the direction of

Popery." I hope he will not deny, that all who have any religion, or the most religion, have ample and equal cause for such apprehensions. Does he know any thing more terrible, more diabolical than the inquisition, to any reasonable man, who would not shipwreck his conscience, his liberty, his life and fortune? It is so far from being chiefly terrible to men of little or no religion, that such only are the safest from it. Men of no conscience will submit to any system, take any oaths, and die for no creed. The greatest atheists are known to be the most cruel inquisitors: the greatest hypocrites are generally the loudest professors every where; and he who has the least religion or honesty, is generally the readiest to charge others with the want of them.

But in this (that is, in the apprehension of the inquisition, under the direction of Popery) says the preacher, still more strangely, *there is no virtue or merit.* Surely there is little candor, and great want of charity in this assertion. Is there no virtue in anxiety for public and private liberty; in a passion to save our country, in an abhorrence of slavery, imposture, idolatry, persecution? No merit in the love of truth and freedom, in rescuing and defending all that is dear to men and society? If the preacher thinks all this not to be religion, namely, to love, to serve, and to endeavour to save the public, by opposing and pulling down what destroys the public, and extirpates religion itself, he had better have kept his opinion to himself.

The famous doctor Gainham, many years resident in the fleet, hearing the Reverend Dr. L—— commended for his great humanity, and great piety; cried out, with his usual modesty, "Who the d——l thanks him for that? His wife beats him. It is she that keeps him humble, and he appears pious by being sad."

What higher virtue can be required in society? What better religion in any member of it, than a warm zeal for his country, its religion and liberties, and a suitable detestation of slavery, imposture and idolatry? Will he oppose to so much useful merit, dry speculations, monkish distinctions, and the repetition of creeds? Will he set up any narrow bigot against so noble a character; a character justly esteemed beyond all others in all free, polite and rational nations? The antient Greeks and Romans never inquired, concerning a friend to the state, a hero in the field, a patriot in the senate, what form of prayer he used, or what mode of worship he practised, or what articles of belief he professed? His public services, his virtuous dealings, were all that the public wanted from him; and whoever had virtue was reckoned to have religion.

Virtue is religion, at least the surest proof and indication of it: whoever has virtue is a good citizen and a good man: nor need society or his neighbours inquire further about him. The contrary reasoning strikes at the very root of religion itself, and of all private and social virtue: thus the best man may be said to be just only from dread of the laws; the best women to be chaste from fear of obloquy; the most pious preachers to be disguised hypocrites, only courting preferment, or popular applause; the bravest soldiers animated by nothing but the love of glory or of pay; and the most devout Christian by the terrors of damnation.

Aristides, Epaminondas, Scipio, Paulus Æmilius, Cato, Cicero, all friends to mankind, all virtuous benefactors to their country, naturally loved liberty, naturally abhorred tyranny; animated to both by a prin-

ciple of virtue. Was not this religion? Will it be said, that they acted against tyrants, only from their fear of tyranny, and from no regard for liberty? And was it a lucky circumstance to Rome and Athens, that tyranny had something in it to be feared by men, who had no impulse but what led them to virtue and the public good?

The wise, the just, and the brave, have at all times been the aversion of bigots and craftsmen, two characters ever famous for little service to mankind, yet always loudest to profess it. What exploits did the common tribe of enthusiastic saints and designing faith-makers, ever perform for the age they lived in, but to darken, divide and en-
thrall it?

“Ecclesiastical courts and inquisitions, under the direction of Popery,” is a suspicious at best an odd phrase, though perhaps not odd from him. He is noted for his zeal for ecclesiastical powers, and for penalties upon such as differ from him, even in religious modes and trifles invented by men: he is a known advocate for severe laws against tender consciences, who boggle at forms and rituals, though agreeing with himself in all fundamental principles, and equal to himself in all points of morality. He is therefore a champion for some ecclesiastical courts and inquisitions; and whoever is for any, where conscience is concerned, is for the worst and the highest, since where small penalties do not avail, the greatest must be applied. Nor doth it import the poor sufferer, by what name his sufferings are called, or under whose direction he suffers.

All persecution is a departure from Christianity, and the bane of it. All persecutors are alike; and where they are equally masters, would go equal lengths. They would be all inquisitors. In this Protestant country they have formerly rioted in fury and oppression, in fines and dungeons, by the mad assistance of the then civil magistrate, who favoured Popery, because Popery was the support of tyranny. That they failed in this their natural progress to erect an inquisition, was owing to Christian checks from the civil power better directed. Such “ecclesiastical inquisitions under the direction of Popery” know no bounds, because they own no controul: they are independent upon, and absolute over the civil power: an independency long claimed, and sometimes confidently usurped in this free Protestant country, even since it enjoyed its highest freedom, derived from the revolution.

Against ecclesiastical inquisitions, even under the direction of Popery, the preacher says nothing. Though it fell so naturally in his way, at this alarming conjuncture, when Popery was making hideous advances to devour us, he only adds, very coolly, with the cautious softening of a *perhaps* and a *may-be*, that “it is a happy circumstance at present, that there is something in Popery, for those to be afraid of, who have no regard for religion.”

I thought that almost every thing in Popery was dreadful and shocking to those who have the most religion. The doctrines of Popery are anti-christian, robbing the Almighty of his highest attributes, and vesting them blasphemously in impostors. The powers of Popery are murderous and implacable. The worship of Popery is buffoonery and idolatry. Popery pretends to make God, and eat him. Popery locks up God’s word. Popery butchers Protestants. Such is the religion of

Popery ; such are the ecclesiastical courts and inquisitions, under the direction of Popery.

Our author has therefore judiciously discovered that there is, or rather suggests, that there may be, something in Popery to be feared. I hope he would not restrain it to such as have no regard to religion. He would have done well, and it lay directly in his way, to have told us, how dreadful the whole of Popery was to every man of any religion or of any sense. It is the only sermon which I have seen upon this awakening occasion, where the horrors of Popery were not the just and chief scope and theme of the preacher. I have seen many excellent ones from many of our prelates, many excellent ones from the inferior clergy, with great pleasure and edification, all full of tremendous descriptions of Popery, and of warm indignation against it, pertinently adapted to the time, and to the people.

NUMBER 99.

Our National Sins no wise Analagous to those of the Jews, nor meriting equal punishment. The Rashness, and Danger of ascertaining and applying Divine Judgments.

SECTION II.

THE preacher referred to in my former, urges the idolatry of the Jews, and the judgments following it, in order by them to awaken us ; us, who have nothing similar to the Jews, and do not run after false gods. Another preacher in his sermon upon the general Fast, has unanswerably shown us the vanity and danger of such idle reasonings and false comparisons.

“ From the character given of the Holy Scriptures of the Old Testament, in several places of the apostolic writings, men, he says, have not only been accustomed to regulate God’s proceeding with particulars, but also to judge of the fate of kingdoms and societies, upon their ideas of his administration of the Jewish commonwealth. This, saith he, hath been the source of numberless superstitions, hurtful both to religion and government ; some even derogatory to the justice of God, others to the rights of mankind ; but all of them violating the rational conclusions of that learning and instruction we are bid to seek for in Scripture, which is so abundantly able to make us wise unto salvation.”

He proceeds to acquaint us, that though, in the Jewish dispensation, God might with the highest justice, punish the children for the crimes of their fathers ; yet in the present disposition of things, such a dispensation would, according to all our ideas of right, intrench on that divine attribute (the justice of God.) He then shews how much “ the title of the *Lord’s Anointed*, given to the Jewish kings, who were pointed out by name by God himself, and anointed by the express

direction of God himself, has been perverted by court flatterers, to support modern tyranny, and so became a principal prop of that absurd and destructive doctrine of divine, indefeasible, hereditary right."

All this is true and plain, and justifies what the author had said before, that "to conclude of God's dealings with states and societies, from his dispensations to the Jewish people, will be the occasion of our turning to our delusion that scripture, which was written for our instruction; at this juncture, says he, it would be turning it to our apparent damage. Religion (says he afterwards) was, amongst the Jews, incorporated with their society, and had a public part. Hence vice and impiety became public crimes, and, as such, were severely punished on the state. But the Christian religion has no public part; it hath not the state for its subjects. Hence vice and impiety are not now public crimes, but only private crimes." He concludes therefore, as reasonably as charitably, "that Great Britain, in its present circumstances, may reasonably aspire to the distinguished protection of heaven."

It is a daring undertaking, to settle the judgments of an infinitely wise, just, and merciful God; to ascertain what they are, or where it is that they fall. I hope and believe, that no national calamity can be called a judgment from God; since, during such, the most innocent are seen to suffer equally with the most guilty, often more; sometimes the guilty escape, and the innocent perish. Can we suppose, dare we presume, that his unerring justice makes no distinction between guilt and innocence, and weighs not exactly the degrees of both? It seems to be an affront to the Almighty, and a denial of his Providence, to maintain the contrary: it represents religion to be without sense, and the great Judge of all the earth to be void of equity.

Enthusiasts, who see the Almighty pleased or angry, just as they themselves are, may arm him with vengeance against times which they dislike, and against persons whom they dislike: they may even behold him slaying the cattle and desolating the soil, and confidently ascribe all this general undistinguishing havoc to the sins of particular men. Impostors, such as Romish monks, may represent him as actuated with human passions, and themselves directing and restraining his passions; represent him launching his judgments, and themselves stopping his hand; thus guiding and controuling the Almighty, and thence governing his creatures. But a Protestant divine scattering judgments makes a very un-protestant figure, and borrows the colours and character of a Popish priest, who controuls the Deity, creates his Creator, eats his Creator, and directs his Creator whom to punish and whom to damn; whom to protect and whom to save; forsees judgments, applies judgments, and charms away judgments.

There cannot be a more lucrative branch of priestcraft than a monopoly of divine judgments. It infers the sovereign direction of superstition, of vain credulity, of panic fears, and of all the unaccountable whims and weaknesses of the poor human soul, the constant and liberal bubble of such pious traders.

As the Jesuits were busy in advancing this their staple spiritual traffic amongst the poor Indians, the Dutch, who are themselves keen traders, but traders of another sort, were too hard even for these vigilant fathers. The apostolic factors taking a pious, knavish advantage of an

approaching eclipse of the sun, threatened the poor savages (led by the light of nature to despise the absurdities of Popery) "that God, at the request of his monitors, the fathers, would visit them for their obstinacy, with a dreadful warning. The sun should be darkened in the midst of his career and glory, as a mark of divine wrath, and a presage of divine vengeance to follow." The Indians acquainted the Dutch with the terrible threats of the Fathers. "Bid them, said the sly HOGAN MUGANS, put off this presage of their mighty judgment for a single day, and we will be their converts as well as you." The Indians made the Jesuits the fair offer. The holy dealers in judgments were taken in their own snare.

Our preacher plainly insinuates, that judgments threatened us, and approached us, for the depravity of certain opinions and writings; a sort of sins which infer but few sinners, at least in comparison of the nation.

The number of authors, good and bad, is but a handful when compared with the people. I have heard that a few righteous men may save a nation; but never that a few sinners will damn a nation. All nations are sinners at all times; and ours particularly; else our Common Prayer is very rashly framed. But still we are not greater sinners than any of our neighbouring nations. Yet these nations are not all visited with Highlanders; though some of these nations entertain very great sinners, even scribbling sinners, as scurrilous and licentious as ours! France abounds with more deists, or (which is the same thing in the eyes of bigots) atheists, than any country in Europe; yet France is too hard for its neighbours, and even assists the Highlanders. There are more blasphemous songs made in a year, and sung every day in Paris, than were ever made in England since the beginning of time. This cannot be owing to want of power in France, either civil or religious. No ecclesiastical courts are wanting there, no power in king or clergy!

We are certainly less corrupt, less debauched than we were immediately after the restoration. Was the restoration a judgment? Was not Charles II. our most religious, as well as most gracious king; and had he not that character given him by the clergy? Or was his restoration, at first at least, reckoned a curse by any but a few enthusiasts, chiefly fifth monarchy men? But enthusiasts are not confined to any party; they are found in all sects, amongst Churchmen, as well as amongst Dissenters; and enthusiasts will be always spying judgments falling, or ready to fall, upon such who thwart their favourite notions and pursuits.

As pious enthusiasts act, so do pious impostors, with zeal equally strong, though not equally sincere, generally with more art. We can therefore never see, never expect a time, when such men will not be boldly denouncing God's judgments. Mankind will never be without sin: the crazy and artful will always make mankind worse than they are, and will be always threatening them with judgments. Heresy is the great cry of the Romish craftsmen; who confidently denounce God's judgments against all that entertain it. Most of those who are heretics to Rome, are heretics or schismatics to one another, all threatening one another with the same awful vengeance. This consideration alone is sufficient to shew the extreme rashness or knavery of those who scatter

and apply such names, and the extreme folly of those who are affected by them.

The Arians were charged by the orthodox with denying our blessed Saviour, God the Son, his due share of the Godhead : they were threatened with divine vengeance for such damning heresy, and found their accusers the keen executors of that vengeance. The orthodox had divine vengeance equally denounced against them by the Arians, for denying due honour to God the Father, and felt in their turn that vengeance inflicted on them without mercy or measure, by the denouncers. Both sides thought themselves bound to punish as well as to accuse. Here was a source of rancour without end ; of blood, which has scarce ever ceased to run : all the natural consequence of zealots interpreting judgments ! For they who presume to foretel them, do often call for them, generally inflict them, or suborn others to do so.

Did the Highlanders come commissioned from God, as well as from the Pretender, to scourge a nation who had renounced the Pretender, and were praying to God against the Highlanders ? What part of the Jewish story is analagous to this ? Had any of our prelates, like the prelate Aaron, set up molten images, or a golden calf, for the English to worship ? I do not find that one magistrate, or one inhabitant of Glasgow, had paid the least divine worship to Baal Peor, or any burghess of Dumfries made his children pass through the fire to Maloch : yet both these towns were terribly ravaged by the barbarous rebels. The barbarians are now routed by the sword of our young Joshua, whose hand, strengthened by the Lord Jehovah, hath prevailed against those reprobate Philistines. It is hoped that their own rocks and dens will yield up the profane tribe to the avenging rod of justice.

But whatever they suffer (and they who made so many suffer so grievously, cannot suffer too much) their sufferings and punishment cannot properly be called a judgment ; since some of them are more innocent than others, did less harm, and meant none, nay meant well, thought themselves asserting a just cause and doing their duty. Such is the force of prejudice, handed down from father to son, and reckoned honour and loyalty ; and such is the power of delusion in believing what they are taught by impostors, whom they account pious, and who perhaps think themselves so.

This plea, which the frame and safety of human society cannot allow to pass at the civil tribunal, as by it the greatest malefactors, and worst parricides would escape the censure of society, and thus be enabled and even encouraged to destroy society ; will yet find allowance at the divine tribunal, where all hearts are open, and no deceit can be hid. Guilt may be so disguised, so befriended and defended, as to appear innocent, sometimes meritorious, in the eyes of men : such were human sacrifices of old ; such the lasting tyranny and cheats of Rome, with all other pious fury and fraud every where : rebellion against the best government, and passive obedience to the most lawless tyranny. Innocence and virtue may be so misrepresented, so traduced, and so painted by art and malice, as to be odious, persecuted and murdered, often with popular applause : witness our blessed Saviour, and the first martyrs, with all the succeeding victims to priests and tyrants ; Sir John Oldcastle and admiral Coligni. I have heard Dr. Tillotson re-

viled, Dr. Sacheverel adored ; king James extolled, king William cursed.

We can never know that God sends his judgments, when he does not tell us : it is great presumption in us to pretend to tell, when he does not tell. If we might with modesty make any conjecture, it seems probable, that his extraordinary temporal interposition with divine temporal punishment, is in cases where human laws are not, or cannot be exerted. This is, *Deo dignus vindice nodus*.

Amongst several popular topics for invoking divine vengeance, and applying it to things below, I have often thought that the black behaviour of the high clergy for near a hundred years before the revolution, and long after, was an obvious and tempting one ; I mean their unchristian enmity to conscience and Dissenters, and their infamous doctrines of slavery. They set our princes (the weakest and the worst) above law ; made them the only authors and absolute masters of law, consequently of the lives and properties of men, and prompted them to perjury in order to exert tyranny.

They were not ashamed to extol James II. (the weakest, the falsest, and the most heartless prince that ever misbecame a crown) as the Solomon of the age, the pattern of learning and of religion, acting by the wisdom, and speaking by the Spirit of God : wicked and pernicious flattery, and the consequence terrible ! The vain monarch, a constant bubble, and the sure property of flatterers and favourites, claimed despotic sway ; claimed to set aside Parliaments, or to over-rule their counsels, to levy money without them, and to govern by proclamations.

SECTION III.

The impious Behaviour of the disaffected Clergy, formerly, how liable to Divine Judgment. Their pestilent flattery to bad Princes, their Enmity to the Best. Their enslaving Doctrine. How unfit to be Teachers ; and how they advance Irreligion.

His son prompted by the same pious flatterers, and delighting in the same impious lying doctrines, grasped the same lawless authority. He hugged and exalted the preaching parasites, who represented him sacred and irresistible as the Godhead, the laws as sedition, his people as slaves. Such of the clergy as adhered to liberty and the laws, and ventured to maintain them, were the constant objects of his frowns and indignation, and persecuted without mercy by their more fashionable brethren.

I enter not into the particulars of his reign, no part of it wise, the greatest part of it arbitrary and wicked, the last part of it miserable. For a great share of the mischief, of the violence and the misery of it, the clergy were answerable, as they animated and justified him in all his lawless pretensions, and all his violent doings. His cruel death, though immediately chargeable upon an usurping army, the only authors of it, was for almost a century charged as a crime upon the nation, and the nation constantly threatened with judgments for it, even after all were dead, who either saw it or consented to it. This was

the language of the disaffected clergy (I mean disaffected to the constitution) 'till the revolution, and by all disaffected to the revolution ever since. Not a word of any judgment upon themselves, who had all along led these weak, depraved princes to their destruction, with pious false strains of loyalty in their mouths, the word of God perverted, liberty spurned under foot, the laws sacrificed to will and lust, the crown misled, and its worst enemies, the preachers, caressed.

How frequent and fashionable ecclesiastical perjury became after the revolution; how much it was fostered and propagated in places of learning, by learned and holy men; how zealously, how fiercely and industriously king William and the late king George were opposed, blackened and even marked for destruction, for the glorious offence of saving and securing our religion, our liberty and our all; all this chiefly by reverend men, who had taken the most solemn oaths to be true and faithful to these princes, our temporal redeemers; and how highly they cherished and practised all disloyalty, perjury and rebellion; all men remember, and it is shocking to memory: surely it could never escape that of our preacher. Nor could the Jewish story furnish him with a more shocking instance of national ingratitude and revolt against God, or of more impious defiance of the Almighty and his judgments. Yet here our prudent preacher neither rouses popular indignation, nor perceives any divine vengeance threatened.

With what face could such men appear in a pulpit, as teachers of religion, they whom the most emphatic ties of religion could not bind; they who distinguished themselves by the blackest perjury; they who promoted perjury by doctrine, as well as by example; they to whom perjury was merit and a recommendation, and who railed at all such as refused to be perjured? What bold mockery in such profane reprobates, to pretend to divine right, or to any respect amongst men, or to any reputation from a phantom of orthodoxy? Could they who violated the most sacred oaths, be influenced by any principles, orthodox or moral? Yet who so craving after high respect, so stud for orthodoxy, so void of charity, so prone to damn men, or so unfit to save men? They were even wicked in assuming any favourable character, as they did it to deceive others, by disguising their own iniquity. Could such men recommend a good life, when they were daily renouncing the precepts of the gospel, and propagating the most hideous morals, perjury, rebellion, treason? What availed their orthodoxy if they really had it, since it restrained them not from defying all the laws of God and man? They were implacable to pious Dissenters, and to all moderate and charitable Churchmen: and orthodoxy without charity is a contradiction, and disgraces itself.

What saved religion, thus abandoned and perverted by its pretended guides, but the mighty blessing of liberty, which left us the full use of our reason, our Bibles, and our consciences; the natural blessings of the revolution? No wonder they hated it, devoutly damned it, swore to it, and laboured to overturn it, with all the heavenly blessings derived from it, particularly, the highest and best, liberty of conscience and civil liberty. What saved the credit and character of the church, but the sound principles, virtuous lives and Christian charity of Tillotson, Tennison, Burnet, Lloyd, and Wake, and other Low Churchmen, all hated and libelled by such as called themselves the only true Church-

men, chiefly distinguished by the great characteristics of perjury and persecution? Even the Dissenters contributed by their religious loyalty and sober lives, to preserve the national religion, and consequently the church, from perishing by the desperate impiety and immorality of her own apostate sons.

Dr. Hickee, who knew them well, says, "That those clergy have set open the flood-gates to a deluge of atheism and impiety;" and he owns the charge brought against them, that "their behaviour had made men sceptical, and gone further towards eradicating all the notions of a Deity, than all the labours of Mr Hobbes——made some men suspect religion as a cheat, and laid them under a temptation to call the whole of religion in question." Yet the same learned man, who was a flaming enthusiast for party, turns this reproach into a compliment, and thanks God, that the main body of the clergy were Jacobites in their hearts. Nor was it at all strange, to hear such an impious strain from this reverend divine, thus to thank God for the perjury of the clergy. Mr. Lesley defied the Parliament to make an oath which the clergy would not take.——He makes them worse than atheists, as "they mocked God to his face, since it was better, says he, to have no God at all, than to set up one to laugh at him."

I could bring many other testimonies against them from the best men amongst them, even from their most favourite authors, particularly from bishop Kenn, a non-swearing Jacobite, and a sad spectator of their apostacy from conscience and oaths, the sacred and tremendous pledges, of conscience; Kenn, their avowed monitor, full of paternal invectives against their ungodly conduct, and of warm sighs for it. But their atheistical carriage was too notorious to want proof.

Where they presided in the celebrated nurseries of education, their first care was to corrupt and poison the minds of youth (often of the first quality in the nation, a dreadful presage to their country!) and to teach them for their first lessons, nay as a first principle, to banish conscience, to hate the government, and to defy the living God, by swearing falsely by his name. We may guess the lamentable effects of this upon the minds of youth.

This was the forlorn, this the impious state of many of the disaffected clergy, within the memory of man. Could they be more ripe for divine judgments, or could there be a more cogent call to threaten them with such? Could any public disaster befalling the Jews some thousand years ago, be of such an alarming example to Englishmen! The Jews, stiff-necked, disobedient and ungrateful as they were, incurred not more aggravated guilt. Idolatry, their most enormous crime, inferred wrong conceptions of the Deity; and their ignorance (though their own fault) was some extenuation. Under right notions of the true God, they could never have worshipped false gods.

Our case was, perhaps, more crying. In the midst of the sunshine of the gospel, in this Christian country, many who preached it renounced in practice (the most effectual way of renouncing) all the most essential precepts of the gospel, as they did those of the constitution, and were at once traitors to religion and the state. Neither was their apostacy more notorious than their hypocrisy. Whilst thus they lived in open practical atheism, they loudly complained of the natural effects of their own atheistical doings, the growth of irreligion, and the dan-

ger of the church. Who were, who could be, such successful promoters of all impiety as themselves? Who, who but they could so effectually endanger any Christian church? Without conscience, which is the seat and centre of religion, there can be no religion. Besides their own want of conscience, they would allow none to other men, and were implacable, indeed professed enemies to tender consciences: A sad proof, that they were themselves unacquainted with any such tenderness!

The cry of atheism, a cry much in their mouths, as ill became them. Men who live as if there were no God, are the most likely to disbelieve the being of a God. And by this rule, they themselves had the best claim to that character, which they so freely bestowed upon men unresembling themselves. It was therefore no wonder to hear Dr. Hickes call Dr. Tillotson an atheist, and publish him in print as the gravest atheist that ever lived. For Hickes, though he had not taken the oaths, was as furious a Jacobite as those that had. He entertained all their uncharitable fierceness and infamous principles; and I do not believe that any set of men, not owning the Romish communion, ever entertained so bad principles, or laboured so vehemently to introduce every public crime and curse, invasion from France, the restoration of a Popish tyrant, the deposition, nay the assassination of a Protestant hero and deliverer, with the re-settlement of the worst parts of Popery, and the exertion of all barbarity against Protestant Dissenters.

Mr. Collier had the traiterous assurance and impiety to exercise openly in the face of the day and the crowd, one of the most dangerous and detestable articles, or rather abominations of Popery, in absolving at the gallows an assassin hanged for a conspiracy to have murdered king William. That divine thus committed such an insult upon the Godhead and the government, as was new in the creation, at least in the eyes of Englishmen. What were all the offensive drolleries of the stage, which Mr. Collier has passionately treated as profane, compared to the devilish crimes of treason, civil war, national desolation, Popish tyranny, and the murder of a king, all pardoned by Mr. Collier, in the person of a bloody traitor?

All this shows, that our preacher might have found national provocations, at least as shocking as those of the Jews, nearer home, and not so long ago; such dreadful provocations to God as must *make the ears of a Christian to tingle*. Here he had ample room to have displayed his discernment, his judgment, and his eloquence, upon such as deserved them. A contemptible libel is a contemptible topic for so able a preacher.

Here too he had an ample field for panegyric upon the present clergy, who have gloriously departed from the corruption, disloyalty, uncharitableness, and all the profligate principles of the former; their sincere zeal for this Protestant king, church and government, their abhorrence of Popery, and their alacrity to defend it, their excellent sermons, and all the noble testimonies they have so seasonably borne.

For myself, I truly honour, I shall ever honour, all such of them as have thus distinguished themselves; as I shall ever heartily despise all mean halting temporizers, and thoroughly detest all parricides, who longed for a change, and wished our misery complete, by the success of the rebels, whom God, of his infinite mercy to this nation, disappoint

and confound ! and in order to it, discipline and punish all their real abettors and favourers !

But I return to say something more of the half Protestant clergy before the revolution ; and then proceed upon the behaviour of them after it.

These prostitute preachers, formerly, surrendered the poor people, who fed them, to beggary and slavery, and the crown, which promoted and enriched them, to delusion, desperate courses, and final ruin. I own, there were then, and always, excellent men amongst the clergy, but what an unequal portion of the clergy they then were, any man that can read may see. One thing was very remarkable and very shameful (if any thing could have been so to men so lost to truth and shame) whilst they were zealously doctrining all men to be absolute slaves to the sovereign, they excepted themselves, and confidently asserted an independent power in themselves ; a power destructive of sovereignty as well as of liberty.

Who were the greatest sinners then in the nation, and who so properly the subjects of divine judgments ? But they who most freely scatter such judgments, never fix them where most due. Could there be a more national, a more crying sin, than such an open, such a pernicious attack upon the happiness of all men, upon their laws, liberty and conscience ? Could there be higher mockery of God, than to preach up tyranny (the root and engine of all evil under the sun) as the ordinance of God ? To leave it implicitly to the will of a weak, passionate or debauched man, to make and unmake laws, to exalt the worst men, and to reward the best with gaols and gibbets ? To damn the best and only remedy against the most direful curse that can befall society ? To compliment a prince void of probity and morals, a Charles II. with the modelling or mangling of the constitution, and with the fate and fortune of all men ?

When such parasites (the more malignant as well as more inexcusable for their holy character) had tempted their sovereign to provoke his subjects to rebel, it was high assurance in them to condemn rebellion, to condemn what they really caused. They were the original incendiaries, and laid the train. Rebellion was but the explosion, and naturally followed.

The same incendiaries, who led, or rather drove our princes into violent and despotic counsels, before the revolution, incensed the people into unprovoked disaffection, after it. They misrepresented the public saviour as a public usurper. They took all oaths. They taught their hearers to break all, and shewed them the way.

What could be a more hideous iniquity, a more threatening curse, a bolder disowning of the living God ; a more impious insult upon the reason of man ; a more dangerous assault upon civil society, or a more desperate renouncing of all morals, and defiance of all shame ?

Was not national perjury a crime terribly complex, pregnant with guilt and woe, a national provocation of divine justice ? Yet upon this alarming subject auditories were rarely roused. What is still more monstrous, perjury was accounted merit. And whilst the most conscientious Dissenter, religiously true to the government and his oath, was traduced and damned ; a perjured High-Churchman, brutal and debauched, was a favourite character.

SECTION IV.

mate and ridiculous Application of Divine Judgments, by y, selfish, and factious Spirits. It is urged for Argument reason is wanting.

There be a broader way to national perdition, than what I have specified? Or could the terrors of divine vengeance be more fully urged? Yet this was a topic not in fashion, and who would have presumed to have urged it, would have not only passed for a madman, but for a false brother.

Different offences, none against God, but high ones against man, were the burden of their outcries for divine wrath; airy abstractions, unmeaning distinctions; tithes given by men, not by God; of right divine; rituals, postures, cloth and colours; blood shed a hundred years ago; a vicious Jacobite priesthood, not the vicegerents of God, though daily swearing by his holy name; propagating perjury and treason: for such impious crimes public woes and wrath divine were usually denounced, and approached.

How easily remembered what a malignant spirit possessed the factious clergy in the former rebellion; how little the oath, and their sacred oaths, influenced such men. Could there be a greater sin personal or national? Yet I do not remember, then the common subject of declamation from the pulpit, or with divine judgments.

Ministers of the Kirk of Scotland, an hundred years ago, threatened that if they took not the covenant, or forsook it, with the fearful judgment of the Lord, and were wonderfully quick-sighted in perceiving the dreadful overtaking all backsliders; that is, all who would not conform to their opinions, their religion and their politics, just according to the humours and narrow patterns of the saints. The English called the saints, as traitors and hypocrites, and derived all arguments, from the sins, the frenzy and rebellion of the saints, to condemn them freely to eternal wrath, as the saints did these their enemies; cursing for curse, as well as angry names, lordly prelates, Baal, dumb dogs, and persecutors of the brethren.

Each party claimed as a partial champion on either side: the one defended injustice by religion; increased Christianity whilst the other denied charity, besought the merciful God, in wrath, to blast the wicked, and applied the divine thunder with infernal fury. The factious parties blindly believed, and devoutly confirmed the voice of each other as censure of their lying leaders; and the same eyes, who saw roguery and fanaticism in the opposite party, perceived not roguery and fanaticism as obvious in their own.

There be more anti-Christian bigots than such clergymen, on either side? What would become of religion, and of mankind, were no one left to govern them? Yet, who so eager as these madmen to govern the world, religion and human-kind?

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A clergyman in the west, hearing that a farmer in the village had renounced by lightning, cried with extacy and uplifted hands, "The Lord will be exalted in all his doings: This man was an unchangeable Anabaptist, and could not be brought into the way of salvation. Whether he is gone, I do not say; but I would not follow him for the empire of the globe." He scarce had finished this pious uncharitable rant, before he was told, that Sympsop the parish clerk, a zealous Churchman, who suited proper psalms to Jacobite holy-days, had fallen even as the farmer had fallen, close by his side, and by the same stroke.—"The Lord giveth, said the good doctor, and the Lord taketh away: blessed be the name of the Lord."

This gloomy bigot and party man (for he had been on both sides, though strongly suspected to be still of that which he had upon oath renounced), treated the great Sovereign of universal nature, like a party man, narrow and prejudiced as himself! He presumed to apply everlasting mercy and everlasting wrath, just according to the measure of his own peevishness and partiality.

These dealers in judgment never see, nor apprehend any, for their own enormities and excesses, however scandalous, however affecting the public weal. They generally apply them to persons and opinions, which they themselves dislike; to opinions which discredit and cross their interested maxims; to persons who expose clerical faults, and call for clerical amendment, and therefore are proper objects of clerical vengeance, consequently of divine judgment. All such reformers are terrible atheists and unpardonable sinners, and with John Huss, our Cranmer and Ridley, consigned to temporal and eternal flames; the best men cursed and martyred by the worst.

This wantonness in applying at random the awful judgments of God, where he himself does not declare them such, would appear as ridiculous as it is bold (generally blasphemous) were it not for the dangerous and cruel use, which the pretended and designing explainers make of it. For, it is a special market for craftsmen.

An idle, romping school-boy trod upon his grandmother's toe, and put a capital corn into a raging fit. The old woman lost all temper, and in a fury as bitter as her pain, told him "That the Lord would requite him." The lad, in infinite confusion and allright, had recourse to his heels, and sprang down stairs in such a hurry, that he fell and broke his leg. "Did I not tell you so, sirrah?" says his grandmother, falling into a fresh passion with him for his misfortune. She, however, prayed the Almighty to forgive the poor child, and to correct him no further; "for that she had forgiven him."

Vice is usually followed by misfortunes: evil doings, both in a nation, and in the individuals of a nation, produce evil consequences, and punish themselves. Debauchery brings diseases, as idleness and profusion do penury. That all evil is displeasing to God, we all know, and he is no respecter of persons. Doubtless he considers and hates crimes according to their malignity and degrees. As nothing can hurt him, it is probable, that the men who offend him most, are they who do most hurt to one another; that consequently, all oppressors, all persecutors and deceivers, are the most odious in his eyes: that mental errors and erroneous worship, well meant cannot displease him; and that sincerity in devotion is ever acceptable to him; that no religion

but that which plagues and punishes men (as all cheating religions do) can be offensive to him ; that living well, and doing well to one another, are the capital duties amongst men, and the most acceptable to God : that whoever does these duties, need fear no judgments.

As to words and professions and symbols, it is in the power of the men to utter and perform them ; and such utterance and performance, however solemn and seemingly devout, are no proofs of a sincere or devout heart. The greatest impostors are always the most pompous, pathetic and grave.

It was a rational and an honest answer, which the oracle returned to a state of Greece, going to war with another Greek state, and desiring to know, what they must do to make Apollo their friend ? " If you will but act like honest men, and fight like brave men. Apollo will always be your friend," replied Apollo's priest, though generally a liar, and always a cheat : yet in the language of these cheats, heaven was constantly interposing and sending down judgments, in their defence, upon all lovers of truth, who profanely laughed at their trade, and detested their imposture.

An emperor of China was superstitiously alarmed to see a mulberry tree in his garden covered with leaves in the space of seven days ; then wither and lose them all, in three days more. The solemn prophesying bigots about him, increased his panic with a doleful tale of terrible judgments to ensue. His minister, to whom he communicated his fears, and the terrible presage of his pious fortune tellers, calmed his mind with the argument of an honest and a rational man : " virtue, said he, rules all presages, and renders them good or evil : govern your subjects with equity, and nothing can shake your repose."

A Pagan priest of old, and interpreter of omens (which all men alike misunderstand and misconstrue) would on such an occasion have filled the temples with the smoke of incense, which had signified no more than so much air ; or made them flow with the blood of victims ; of just as much use as so much water : a Popish priest would have enjoined fasts, processions, masses and penance ; proper means to make the people idle, superstitious, and idolators of their priests ; but, above all, riches and oblations to the church, fresh honours and prerogatives to the clergy, with the lives and estates of all such as had offended the clergy, confuted their lyes, laughed at their grimaces, and detested their bold mockery of God and man.

Such are the profit and advantages accruing to crafty men from the system of judgments ; no wonder it has never dropped ; a system which makes priests the privy counsellors of the Almighty, the oracles of his will, the heralds of his wrath, the intercessors for his mercy, armed with a divine claim to all means of supporting their dignity, and executing this their high deputation below ; a claim to princely revenues, implicit reverence, all secular authority, ecclesiastical courts and inquisitions ; powers to crush all gainsayers, and all such as presumed to think or to dream contrary to their standard of thinking and dreaming ; a presumption which, in the cry of craftsmen, will always be the crying profaneness and great curse of the age, and always be drawing down judgments upon the nation.

This cry answers another end, equally wicked ; it constantly serves the outrageous spirit of faction. The decay of religion, and the cur-

tempt of the clergy, was a popular engine in queen Anne's time, employed to change the whole administration (the most glorious that ever England had seen) and threatened the most destructive change that ever England could see. The convocation was loudest in the cry, and drew up an invective against all the sober part of the nation; indeed a libel against the nation itself, under the charge of growing irreligion and infidelity; a charge full of falsehood, bitterness and calumny; chiefly composed by a lively, learned and restless incendiary, nurtured in faction, and hardened in perjury, afterwards convicted of treason and banished for it, yet reckoned a champion for the church against religion and morals; supported and lamented as a confessor, after he was condemned as a parricide; and adored as a martyr, though he died in the service of rebellion.

Yet it has been common to hear this incendiary, with all this complex guilt, applauded as a pastoral pattern, by men of the same spirit; and I have lately seen a panegyric in the public papers, upon a dead vicar in Kent, for having strictly adhered to the discipline of that incendiary, and thence shewn himself worthy of such a patron: as if treason and perjury were no stain upon a bishop, much less a disqualification for a bishoprick. Hath there been more abandoned casuistry found amongst the Jesuits?

No wonder that in a libel from him there were palpable falsifications in fact, and not a sentence of fair truth; yet his brethren concurred irreligiously and factiously with the libeller. They were most incensed against what had gained glory to the nation, and apparently made it prosper, namely, a toleration to tender consciences. They therefore reviled the ministry, who supported it, and misrepresented them as little better than atheists.

I will not charge our preachers with any such intention, when, complaining of the prevailing impiety, blasphemy, and undisguised profaneness, appearing, as he says, in many instances; he adds, "how deplorable must the state of a nation be, when men find encouragement to provide such entertainment for the nation!"

He had just mentioned the burlesque upon the Te Deum, which was not encouraged by the nation, but universally decried, as I have before observed. He had therefore no cause to deplore the state or taste of the nation upon that score. It is strange that he gives no more instances of the prevalence of blasphemy, when he says, 'blasphemy swarms.' The mad books about the Trinity are not blasphemous, but only the different guesses of men about a mystery, which no man can explain. No wonder they eternally vary in their eternal explanations.

He does not, he says 'condemn a sober inquiry into the truth of religion;' but I presume he will take upon him to judge whether it be sober or no, and readily condemn it, if it appear to him not to be sober. It will be easy, perhaps good policy, to call it ludicrous and profane, though the author meant sincerely, and studied decency. Suppose the objections be ever so candid and strong; will a zealot like them be better for that character? Perhaps their very strength may be the greatest crime: They may be therefore faulty, because there is no fault to be decried in them; and they may be punishable for being unanswerable. Calvin needed not have burned Servetus (and probably, for his own reputation, would not) could he have answered him.

Whatever there is in religion agreeable to eternal reason, every reasonable man will embrace and defend. Whatever is against reason, it is pardonable to doubt; it is reasonable to examine. Every man will readily consent to what is obviously his interest. There is no merit, but rather blindness and folly and infinite danger, in resting our faith upon names and authority. Implicit belief is credulity, which subverts religion, and establishes priestly tyranny.

SECTION V.

The Religion of the Multitude rarely the Effect of Examination and Inquiry, but of Accident and Habit. The mischievous Tendency of blind Belief.

FALSE, scurrilous and foolish attacks upon religion, will be ineffectual, scorned and shocking. The many will always have religion, which is rarely gained by inquiry, but generally taken implicitly, and retained by rote. There are few that have not some system of speculations, which is religion to them, and answers the purposes of religion to society, as it infers an awe of a superior power. At worst, every man professes morality, which is the surest demonstration of having religion, and is itself religion; generally found the purest, as it is not tainted with superstition and craft, two pestilent ingredients that pervert religion into farce and interest. Religion so perverted is none, or worse than none.

Is a Papist the better neighbour for believing the huge lies of transubstantiation and infallibility; when by the same spirit and authority which persuades him to think that he believes impossibilities (for the thing is impossible) he is led to punish and destroy his neighbours for not doing what they cannot do, or for not professing what their conscience abhors?

I would much rather confide in a man who does not believe a future state, than in one who trusts to absolution for gaining him everlasting bliss. The former has the motives of natural honesty, credit and friendship amongst his neighbours, with security from starving, stripes and infamy, to hold both his heart and his hand from enormities. The latter, though he believes that his sins will damn him, will commit the worst, if by committing the worst he can induce his priest to absolve and save him. To murder heretics, is merit; to murder an heretical prince, is the highest merit. No temporal reward that the Jesuits could have given, would have tempted Ravillac to have stabbed Henry IV. of France. But he was effectually tempted with an assurance of a retribution in paradise, which no worldly power could have offered him.

The religion of most nations is rather chance and a lot, than a choice; much less the effect of anxious examination. It descends from the parents, like the national language; and all nations think their own the best, though not one in many thousands can prove it to be so, even where it is so. They never once doubt it, yet pay great sums to certain persons to maintain to them what they are already sure of,

and for repeating to them what they already know ; nay, what they would kill any one for calling in question ; or, that would charge them with questioning.

The Christian populace, I doubt, would have been mostly Mahometans, had they been born Mahometans. The Mahometans would have been English Christians, had they been born Englishmen ; the Jews been persecuting Catholics, and the Catholics persecuting Jews, had their births been exchanged. A late Grand Monarque, if born amongst Hugonots, in lower life, and with a better education, would have been a zealous Calvinist, or probably scared into Popery by the converting dragons. Daniel Burgess might have been a Cardinal ; Richard Baxter a mortified capuchin ; George Fox Pope of Rome ; Archbishop Laud a keen son of the Kirk ; Dr. Sacheverel a raging faquir, scattering death and damnation ; and our preacher an accomplished Mufti.

It is impossible and against nature, to settle a uniformity of opinions any more than of tastes, faces and complexions. Where the most cruel and wicked pains are taken about it, and the most knavish and sanguinary instruments employed to effect it, success is most notoriously wanted. Cruelty to increase religion, mars religion. Violent methods used against atheism, make atheists (if there be any such) and teach them to dissemble and to hide their sentiments. You cannot confute what they do not own, and they continue incurable by not daring to confess and to reason. The best men often bear this brand, who seeing impostors imposing the holy name of religion upon their own pursuit of power and gain, by bearing their testimony against such impiety, provoke the impostors to render them odious to bigots and to the gross vulgar, who always believe what their own impostors tell them, and never see further than their own impostors let them. The cry of craft becomes the cry of the vulgar. He is always an atheist whom the craftmen pronounce to be so ; and then curses, dungeons and flames, are proper punishment for atheism.

Where is there less religion than where religion is most awfully guarded, with all human restraints and terrors, by all the arts of men, and all the malice of devils, by lying miracles, stupendous ignorance, a tame, stupid and zealous populace, a riotous omnipotent priesthood, vested with boundless power and wealth ? In the most Catholic countries you find pompous, deceitful devotion ; no rational piety ; no signs of the plain religion of the gospel ; the spirit of the gospel disowned and extinct ; the very first principles and sources of religion shut up and held in chains ; freedom of opinion, tender consciences voluntary worship, all accounted the most heinous crimes against religious men, damned and punished with racks and fire ; idolatry the only devotion in fashion ; and more safety in living a Sodomite and a murderer, than a pious Dissenter.

Men of inquiry and penetration cannot be Papists ; and, finding no religion to be better than Popery (since a man who has no religion, has no temptation to do mischief for religion) such men are of course led toward atheism. For I sincerely believe, that few men were ever led into it. An Eternal Power clothed with all suitable attributes, is evident from the light of nature. Who would not rather believe that there was no God, than a God who did or delighted in cruelty and folly, or impowered any men, under any pretence or name, to cheat and

enthral all men, or to afflict and torture any man ? The name of atheist given to men of fair characters, noted for parts and knowledge, as it often is by bigots and knaves, ceases to be odious in the eyes of many, and becomes sometimes eligible and pleasing in those of most.

Thus religion is banished out of the world under colour of securing religion in it. This security, in truth, is all meant, not for religion, but for religious men, impudently so called by themselves, hypocritically by all whom they terrify, and slavishly by all whom they bewitch. By this selfish, cruel, impious policy, they who have the assurance to send missionaries to convert nations, warn all discerning nations never to be converted. But they trust to the lies of their priests, and to the ignorance or credulity of the people. They dare tell no people, however stupid, that when once they become Catholics, they must become slaves, be plundered and oppressed to support and exalt their Catholic perverters ; that they must not entertain the most rational thought ; but, if they change their opinion, must either be hypocrites, or burned for their sincerity. This is the eternal fate and disgrace of all who hold persecuting principles, that none who do so can offer to make converts with any consistency or honesty ; or with any success, when once they are known. This is the just curse always attending persecutors.

The many, especially the mere vulgar, will have the religion in fashion, and always believe that to be religion, which their priests tell them is so. Men of free opinions will always be charged by bigots and the croud, with having no religion : though without freedom of opinion there can be no rational religion. Opinions taken upon trust, as they are void of reason, do no credit to religion, nor ought to be received, much less revered, for such.

It is therefore a liberty belonging to all men, to examine by reason what is proposed to them for religion ; if they find it true, they will embrace it ; if it appear false or foolish, they ought not. It is repugnant to our idea of God, that he can enjoin what is not true, or expect from man to assent to what the best light, which God has given to man, cannot comprehend.

There can be no merit, but, on the contrary, great folly, in swallowing any notions implicitly : they may be false as well as true ; and he who takes the word of another for any thing which he tells him, may as well take his word for all that he tells him, and thence become the slave and property of his leader. If we once give up reason, there is no end of wandering and misguidance ; and the disuse of reason encourages and even invites false lights and false teachers. Even before we can believe God's word, we must know it to be his ; nor is there any sure rule to know it by but reason. When it appears to reason, that it is God's word, the reason of man must assent to it. If we believe it upon the authority of men, we can never be certain but that men may deceive us.

Thenceforward it is not reason, nor religion, that governs you, but they who are guides in religion, and may, if they will, make your religion a religion to their own purposes, as the Popish priests literally do. You are then absolutely at their mercy, what to believe, what to fear, and what to adore. This is the great source of Popery. They who assume the absolute explanation of Scripture, are in effect the makers of Scripture : as the sovereign explanation of laws implies law-

making. Both these powers establish tyranny at once. No Papist can be said to have any religion. He says after the priest by rote, and is the priest's bubble and slave.

Such credulity has been indeed the grand source of the most crying and desolating evils that have laid waste the creation, and afflicted and enslaved men; the source of all idolatry, pious frauds, and persecution; of tyranny, and of (what comprehends them all) Popery.

The Pagans adored as deities the host of heaven, infernal spirits, beasts wild and tame, devouring serpents, birds of prey, stinking herbs and diseases; all upon the credit of lying priests, and by the senseless force of fashion.

The Papists worship bread and bones, and dead men: and the impostors, their priests, who poison and bewitch them with such trumpery, mischief and nonsense, as if it were all real religion, pass with their blind votaries as vice gods, who can do whatever God himself can do, bless and curse, blast and prosper, save and damn, and dispose of heaven and earth.

Ought such blindness, such fraud and villainy, to be called religion? Yet have the Papists any other? Are they, can they be, the better for so devilish a religion, that keeps them in all grossness and ignorance, and prompts them to all impiety, and to the worst barbarities? Are they better subjects for being ready at the priest's command, to rebel against their prince, to depose and stab, and murder him; nay, for thinking such horrible crimes to be meritorious? Can they be good neighbours, who hate and damn, persecute and kill their neighbours, for following reason and conscience; and worshipping God, as God requires to be worshipped, in spirit and in truth?

Is their religion any restraint from crimes, when it prompts them to commit the highest, and absolves them from all guilt when they have contracted the most hideous? This very power of absolution usurped by their clergy, is a dissolution of religion itself, and defeats all its purposes and influence. What criminal, threatened with damnation, and the gallows just expecting him, will not be sorry to be so near pain and death, and unceasing torments after death? Yet for this mechanical sorrow, or even for professing it, all his guilt is discharged, and he thus more encouraged to contract a fresh score, not the less secure from being ever so black. Still a new pardon is ready upon every new peril, which will naturally lead him to apply for it, and to declare his fitness to receive it.

Here is an everlasting warrant for everlasting transgression; and every such warrant a certain incitement to sin. The religion of Popery, therefore acting up to all its principles, far from being a check to crimes, is a call to all crimes and immorality; nay, an office for all mischief, all cruelty, and all abominations; and thus dreadfully may every religion be perverted, where the priests claim such absolving power, and thus abuse it.

That there are not more mischiefs daily flowing from this horrid fountain (as God knows there have been, and are, too many and too dreadful) must be ascribed to natural impulse, to innate tenderness, the child of humanity, not quite extinguished nor hardened even by craft into brutality and cruelty. A Papist, left to nature and the rules of honour, is capable of high generosity, trust and friendship: but the best

hearted Papist, under the influence of his priest, inflamed by false fears or false hopes (the stronger with bigots for being false) heaven opened to receive and reward him, if he be obedient, and hell to swallow and burn him if disobedient; will zealously sacrifice all faith and friendship, and perpetrate the most inhuman, the most infamous enormities.

The noblest, the most religious character, charged with heresy, is horrible to all who are taught to hate heretics; as the Papists are earnestly taught; and where paradise is the reward of destroying heretics, there will be numbers ready to earn it. When the Pope had damned the poor pious Albigenses, the proto-martyrs of the reformation, and had published a croisade against them, half a million of men, drunk with zeal, thirsting for blood, and urged by murdering monks, took arms to destroy those primitive Christians. The most vicious and profligate criminals, the most abandoned outlaws and desperate cut-throats, were the keenest adventurers and deepest in the slaughter, as by it they gained a plenary pardon for all their sins.

Could there be a more awakening call to mankind, to combine together for the utter extirpation of such a hellish hierarchy? Can all the infernal spirits together, boast such myriads of murders, such successful outrages against men and the creation, in a thousand years, as the more infernal spirit of Popery has produced and gloried in, every century? Yet so binding is superstition, so bewitching is priestcraft, that the father of the assassins of Christians was revered as the father of Christendom, and adored like a God: Rome, the sink of abominations, the seminary of frauds, sodomy, cruelty and tyranny, passed for the holy city. What mockery of God! what infatuation in men!

Could the want of religion have thus intoxicated, thus enslaved, thus butchered mankind, thus defaced the creation, thus mastered or banished reason? It does not appear that the greatest disturbers, and pests of the world, have been so from want of religion. Most of them were slaves to superstition, tyrants to their fellow creatures, some of them sacrificers of men: and, which is much the same thing, most of them persecutors of conscience.

Ferdinando the Catholic had great zeal without common honesty. Philip II. was drenched in perfidy, incest and blood; a bigoted Papist, an implacable enemy to Protestants; a flaming patron of the inquisition; an eager burner of Jews and heretics. His son made his kingdom a desert, by the expulsion of the Moors, his most industrious subjects, not made idle by keeping holy days. This weak prince, in spite of all warning from his wisest nobles, gave way to bigotry, to the lying inflammatory invectives of the clergy, threatening him with terrible judgments, and rousing him by forged miracles, particularly of a bell, which being a good Catholic, rang to the same tune of its own accord.

Lewis the Eleventh of France was drunk with superstition; a bigot to saints and relics; faithless to God and man; a tyrant to his people. Whilst he was once treating of a peace with Charles Duke of Burgundy, who from eternal experience knew that no treaty would bind him, the Duke insisted that, besides the usual oath on such occasions, Lewis should swear by St. Claude. Lewis, who would readily invoke God and angels, and all the other saints in paradise, to any falsehood, showed an utter aversion to forswear himself by St. Claude. He had a

notable reason for this distinction and difficulty. There was a current tradition, which he firmly believed, "That whoever swore falsely by that saint, would infallibly die within the year." A successor of his, wanting his sagacity and courage, surpassed him in bigotry. To prove himself a complete bigot, he acted like a miserable politician, by lightening his country of a million of people ; as bad a neighbour as a king ; a perfidious and extensive ravager, without other check than the safety of his person ; for though he was lavish of blood, he had none of his own to spare.

Had these tyrants wanted religion (for their superstition passed with themselves for such, as it does with all men who have it) would they, could they, have done more mischief ? I think it evident, that they would have done less, had their bigotry been less. Bigotry justifies every iniquity ; absolution discharges all.

NUMBER 100.

The free Use of Reason the best Cure for Bigotry, and the Violence of Enthusiasm.

I know no possible harm that the free exercise of reason can do to the world. It may, it must, on the contrary, do much good. It is the perversion of it that only can do hurt ; but still the cure is to be found in itself. And the abuse of it does not condemn it. What has been more abused and perverted than religion, chiefly by the professed teachers of religion ? Now, whether religion perverted, or reason perverted, do most mischief, let the observation of all men, and the experience of all times, declare.

By what I have said, the thing methinks, may be decided. The many are never free-thinkers. The tribe of felons, of robbers and murderers never are. They generally live in the common profession, and die in the common devotion. Where reason is most stretched it can never produce the evils which pious craft, particularly absolution and sacerdotal power, have constantly produced.

It is remarkable, that all the noted railers against reason and free inquiry into things religious, have been undiscerning bigots, or interested and designing impostors, persecutors of conscience, and such who would monopolize the rule of conscience ; Laud, with his hot-headed brethren and followers ; Sheldon, and the other debauched court-clergy after the restoration ; such sour men as Dr. South, and such crazy ones as Dr. Sacheverel, since the revolution : Whilst all the great men and great divines of those times, and of all times, have distinguished themselves by their free sentiments, and encouraged the same freedom in others ; Lord Verulam, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Lord Falkland, Lord Shaftesbury, Chillingworth, Taylor, Tillotson, Cudworth. Whitchcote, Bayle, Locke, Fleetwood, Newton, Trenchard, and all

others of their discerning candid spirit, all friends to mankind, all hated by bigots.

Did these great and good men ever promote animosity and strife, for speculations, ceremonies and trifles? The good of mankind was their grand aim and study: the improvement of reason, the empire of Christian charity, and universal benevolence, the motives and objects of their pursuit.

It would make a curious, useful, and, I think, an easy inquiry, what little good, and what mighty mischief has been in all ages done by bigotry, compared with what little harm, and what great good, are necessarily done by free inquiry, or if you will, freethinking. By the witchcraft of bigotry you see Christians set against Christians: nation against nation; countries enslaved; persecution reigning; communities exhausted, slaughtered or starving; learning and liberty banished; their champions martyred; and a few gloomy tyrants, without bowels, grinding and terrifying all men, without mercy.

Freedom of opinion would prevent or remove all these tragical curses, and is therefore always itself decried and cursed by those who do or would inflict them. Let free inquiry take place, what a surprising glorious change would appear all over the world, and as it were a new creation, the beauty of liberty, the force of truth, captivating every rational beholder, and scattering their mortal enemies; monks and delusion, and every deformity flying; all the contradictions, all the cheats, all the terrors of Popery disappearing, with all the Popish trumpery whatsoever; infallible frailty; a deity of dough; stinking relics, without any originals; saints without holiness, often without existence; objects of worship created by carpenters; travelling houses; sailing millstones; talking stone, and dancing timber; the inquisition sunk in utter darkness, the inquisitors trembling and seeking to hide themselves in their own late dungeons; the Turks laughing at Mahomet; the Catholics at his holiness, and our Protestant Papists at St. Atterbury and St. Laud.

There are no free-thinkers in Lapland or the Highlands. Savages who make no inquiry, have no scruples. Bigots are savages in religion, and the ready authors of all mischief and confusion.

The ruffians now in arms against their king and country, are led into rebellion by authority, as well as for pay and plunder. Common sense and very small reflection, would change their hearts, make them ashamed of their crime, reconcile them to their duty, and arm them against their idol, and against those who have seduced them to worship him. They would soon perceive that it is crying wickedness and phrenzy, in needy, uninformed mountainers, to destroy what the representatives of the kingdom have established, and over and over confirmed. They would know that the late king James was a perjured tyrant, the blind tool of France and Rome, and an enemy to his people; that he had robbed them of their property, and traiterously broke all the laws that secured their religion and liberty, and fortune. That as he acted like a beast of prey, it was as necessary and as right to expel him, as to expel a foreign enemy. That an hereditary right to be lawless is impious cant, which extinguishes religion and human society. That every state has inherent in it a right of self-preservation, conse-

quently of combating force with force : a right exerted at the revolution ; and 'tis treason to question it, rebellion to rise against it.

But alas! the very redemption from slavery, procured us by the revolution, these wild men, cheated by their priests, and awed by their chiefs, believe to be oppression, and commence rebels to overthrow public liberty, the highest national blessing, but represented to them as intolerable slavery. Under this blindness, they who are miserable vassals to their chiefs, and miserably oppressed by them, follow their chiefs to oppress the public and all men, preposterously professing to rescue the public and all men, from oppression. A wonderful contradiction naturally arising from a composition of infatuation and impudence ! The former always swallows what the latter asserts.

Were the unfortunate furious clans guided only by the light of nature (ever extinguished by false guides) they would be quiet, contented subjects to the king, and throw off their real tyrants, the chiefs. Such would be their happiness in thinking and judging for themselves ; and such too would be the happiness of their neighbours and the whole kingdom. Such is their present misery, slavery and rebellion ; such too the misfortune of the kingdom, in blindly following the guidance and mischievous tuition of others, who serve their own ends, and gratify their ambition and rage, by the blood and blindness of their credulous and bewitched followers.

I do not remember one unprovoked war, or rebellion, or sedition, raised by men, who thought for themselves, and weighed right and wrong. There never have been, there never can be any such. They who think not for themselves are no thinkers at all. They who let others think for them, are the blind followers of others. And thus men of craft govern all the rest, not only fools, but men of good natural sense, who not exercising their own reason, cannot be said to have their own religion ; as I have just illustrated in the example of Highlanders : *Quibus non Judicium non Odium, nisi indito et jussa.*

The same is true of such as rebelled against the late king, who, no more than his son, ever broke a law, or ever oppressed a subject. Apostate priests belied his reign, blackened his character, incensed their dupes and the rabble, and blowed the trumpet of rebellion.

The great and consuming curse of persecution, as wasteful a calamity as rebellion, and generally springing from the same bewitching craft, and the same implicit credulity, had never banished humanity, thinned the world, silenced the gospel, mocked God, overturned religion, and affronted common sense, but for such magical imposture nurturing popular infatuation. No man would have hated, much less hurt another for a mistake in counting his fingers, or for a blunder in his fancy, no more than in his dreams, which are the fancies of sleep ; had not craft told simplicity that certain damnation attended such heinous involuntary errors.

Transubstantiation, and other positions, equally impossible to be true, never to be explained, therefore never to be believed, were yet made articles of faith ; such articles as none but hypocrites or fools could subscribe ; so that they who had least religion had most orthodoxy ; and such articles as they who had most conscience, or any, were burned for not subscribing ; so that such as had least orthodoxy, had most religion.

The light of nature never taught any man to plague another for living under a different roof on a Sunday, no more than any other day, or for his different posture at dinner, or for eating none, or for eating apples instead of onions, or for praying in a barn, and making no bows to either end of it. But Catholic guides, who put out the natural sight of man, to make men see clearer, first intoxicated mankind, then domineering over them, have set city against city, neighbour against neighbour, the son against the father; and in the name of charity made men cut one another's throats.

The great obstacle and terror of their Catholic impostors, is freedom of inquiry, which implies the strength and exercise of reason: a formidable foe, indeed! No wonder they are for ever attacking it, and for ever trying to weaken and destroy it, by all the arts of calumny, all the efforts of malice. By implicit belief, without examination, the Catholic impostors reign and prosper, and Catholic communities are kept in gross ignorance, heavy chains and utter misery.

NUMBER 101.

To what I have said above upon the Excesses and Unchristian Spirit of the Clergy in the Reign of King Charles I., I shall add the following Observations upon their incredible Canon, injoining an Oath to an Et Cætera.

THE English convocation at that time, amongst their other anti-christian measures, scarce credible, too wicked for the wickedest tyrants and persecutors 'till then, enjoined an oath, by which besides other extravagancies, all ministers were to swear to an *et cætera*. You were to swear "never to consent to an alteration of the present government of the church by archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, *et cætera*." If you refused this monstrous oath, you were to be forfeited and starved.

Strange, unchristian proceeding! Could there be greater injustice, indeed greater folly, than for the king to confirm it? It was not only an oath, which no man of strict conscience could take, "to swear to be knew not what;" but by it the king gave up his power and supremacy. It was the king and Parliament that made and consequently governed the church; so that in agreeing to this canon and oath, he gave away his own prerogative, and sacrificed the rights and power of Parliament, as he had indeed Parliaments themselves. It was encouraging universal perjury; as it certainly is such, to swear at random to what is not explained, nor even expressed. It was forcing men to swear to what they disliked or might come to dislike, and never to change what many thought grievous and even sinful. It was taking an oath to resist king and Parliament, whenever they, who had formed the church, should attempt to change or reform it. It was engaging by an oath to be rebels, whenever the supreme power should alter or inter-

meddle in church matters. It was giving up the right of the subject to petition for redress of grievance, at a time when the administration of the church was one of the principal grievances of the nation: a grievance so sharp, so general, and so resented, that the motion to impeach archbishop Laud, found not one negative voice.*

The government of the church, by this oath, never to be altered, was then, and had been long oppressive and barbarous, and the morals as well as the doctrines of many of the clergy, very shocking. Could these men, so fond of assuming a divine right, be said to feel the smallest influence of the divine Spirit amongst them, whilst they were indulging their pride and passion against the soberest and most serious Christians, reproaching them, and exposing them to popular hate, to fines, prisons, and the want of bread, all for a ceremony, a posture, or a garment? Could truth or virtue be found in those men, who justified falsehoods out of the divine word; told the king, who was sworn to rule by laws, that he was bound by no law, and damned the subject for defending his property, when it was assaulted against all law.

The private manners of many of the clergy were then so corrupt and scandalous, that the accusations and petitions, and charges against their ill lives, sent up to Parliament, and many of them published, are too long, as well as too shocking, to be repeated. I shall only add, that it is hardly credible how insufficient, how vicious, how superstitious, many of them were; and the more so, the more conforming, and always the bitterest enemies to non-conformists.

If these men were the men in fashion and favour with the king, it is no compliment to him, or them, that they were so by the most pestilent and falsest of all flattery, as well as through his great weakness in believing and caressing them. It shewed what best pleased him, not the observance of his oath, not the protection of his subjects in their lawful rights, but the exertion of a power without bounds, against law and oaths and the rights of his people, all by the persuasion and flattery of the clergy, in return for his extreme complacency to them. Had he used them, as he did his other subjects, they would have convinced him that they were the worst subjects he had.

What was this but a spirit of tyranny in him? And what sort of men, what sort of Christians were they, who flattered and encouraged this spirit, so destructive to Christians and men? It was a perfidious compliment even in them; since whilst they allowed and even animated him to fleece the laity at his pleasure, he was not to lay a finger upon any of their meanest claims; and they claimed, even exercised over the laity an usurpation equal, nay superior to his, not only over a good measure of their property, but an undivided sovereignty over their minds.

When this their spirit, and his, was so apparent in their actions, as well as in their declarations, how could either he or they be popular, or even tolerable, to a free people, daily incensed by both, for depriving them of their precious freedom of body, property and conscience? And under such circumstances, so much suffering on one side, so much encroachment and violence on the other, how could such an oath be relished or received, an oath big with absurdity, perjury and treason: im-

* See Lord Falkland's speech in Rushworth.

possible to be kept or understood, deifying the handiworks of men, and defying the legislature? It could not fail of giving a fresh and terrible alarm, and heighten popular disgusts, already extremely high. Nay, the bishops would needs oblige the clergy to swear to the approbation of ship-money, and all such lawless measures of the court.

The high commission court acted with the rage and inhumanity of inquisitors. The Sabbath was violated by authority and royal command, at the suit of the clergy. The soberest and most holy ministers were branded with the name of Puritans, persecuted and turned out of the ministry and bread.

How little religion was concerned or aimed at in these practices and proceeding of Churchmen, was manifest: since hardly a drunkard, or an idler, non-resident, or an ignorant amongst the clergy, was turned out, though many such there were, as was too fully proved soon after, whilst the most learned, the most exemplary, diligent and most scrupulous teachers, were daily disgraced, stripped and undone.

The more wealth or power in priests, always the less morals. It is then not morality, or knowledge, or any good quality, that recommends men to their favour, but acquiescence in modes and discipline, and zeal for a party.

This was too manifest at that time, and gave infinite scandal to all sober men, to see ministers of parts and piety, punished, silenced and undone; and such as were very vicious and loose, very ignorant and insufficient, caressed and preferred. For fasting and praying, and a religious observance of a religious day, men were subjected to gaols and fines, and the fury of the high commission and Episcopal courts; persecuted and undone for not reading and publishing orders for profaning the Sabbath, or not paying worship to an altar.

The exercises of piety and devotion were suppressed, such as lectures and afternoon sermons, and expositions of Scripture on the Lord's day. The communion table of Protestants was turned into an altar, conformably to the superstition of the Papists: bowings were practised towards it, and recommended as an essential in religion: pictures were set up in churches, with other terrible symptoms to the reformed religion, and so many apparent advances towards Popery. What availed it, that they who made them, disavowed the imputation of Popery, when they thus pursued its spirit and its practices? What is Popery, the dangerous part of Popery, but its idolatry and superstitious rites, and chiefly its power usurped over consciences? Even the superstitions, the fooleries of Popery, are so far formidable as they tend to introduce Papal power; since priests have always directed superstition so as to profit by it.

It is worthy of observation, that after the overthrow of the church and monarchy, many of the Episcopal clergy not only signed this engagement, to be true and faithful to the commonwealth, as then established without a king or house of Lords, but printed and published their reasons for doing so. In this proceeding they eased and assisted their consciences with a distinction between a government *de Facto* and one *de Jure*. A distinction against conscience, and of great service to faction and perjury after the revolution in 1688. 'Tis equally remarkable, that the Presbyterian ministers refused so to subscribe the above

engagement, and many of them published their reasons for such their refusal ; yet were boldly branded, after the restoration, as republicans, by the very men who had sworn to be true to the republic.

NUMBER 102.

Considerations upon the mischievous tendency of Libels ; chiefly public Libels.

UPON this subject I expect to find the more candour and attention, as the common danger has calmed the minds of men, and almost silenced the clamour of party. False zeal and disaffection are driven into cabals in corners ; and I hope that common sense will be heard in the cause of national peace and union.

It cannot but be a pardonable attempt, to prevent or allay popular heats unjustly raised, and industriously kept up, such as turn the head and inflame the heart, and weaken society by dividing it : to remove pernicious prejudices, to reconcile men to their common interest, to abate their wrath and disgusts, inspired by such as would mislead them, against those who never hurt them.

If their passions be kindled, and their minds racked to no purpose, or for an ill purpose, are not the authors of such pain and disquiet to be considered by them as dangerous seducers and firebrands, who would gain credit or profit at their expence, govern them by imposing upon them, tease them with false fears and information, and disturb the public for private ends ? It is not for the credit of any man, to defame king, lords and commons, because a libeller bids him, and to regard his character and authority more than those of the legislature.

One who lives by a paper, or strives to serve the views of a faction by it, will be apt to consider, not what is true and right, but what is taking and gainful ; and under the temptation of multiplying lies, to multiply loaves and readers. If it be popular to rail at public men and public measures, it cannot be expected that he will take the unpopular side and make their panegyric, even when they most deserve it. It is more probable, that he will rail at their best actions, if their best actions be ill understood, and therefore unpopular, and will study to make them so, if in doing it he can but raise the name and sale of his paper.

This generally is the policy and temper of such writers. They are the Swiss of interest and party, and with loud pretences to independency, are slaves to the popular cry, slaves to their own passions, slaves to a spirit of their own raising or fostering. What party writer dare, if he would, do justice to a worthy character obnoxious to his party, or own that there are any such ? What mercenary writer will venture to tell any truth, which is likely to sink the sale of his paper, or to smother any safe falsification which tends to raise it ? It is the great drift, therefore the constant practice, of both sorts, to humour their

readers, to incense and mislead them ; to magnify their own favourites, to blacken and traduce their opponents, to see nothing but excellency and merit in the former, to allow nothing but folly or malignity in the latter.

If we were to take the word of the Examiner, a very witty, but very unfair and bitter paper in the late queen's time, we must believe and wonder, as doubtless the author meant his readers should, that Lord Cowper had started at once from an attorney's clerk to a Lord Chancellor ; from transcribing briefs, to keep the great seal, and to preside on the bench ; that a page was converted into a captain general, and that the duke of Marlborough had been raised from carrying his master's train, to the command of the confederate army. " We have seen," says that lively writer, mentioning, or rather inventing the wild marvels of the whig ministry, who were to be represented as having done nothing but what was wild and marvellous ; " We have seen footmen removed from behind the coach into the inside, and the livery left off for the laced coat. Princes have been made out of pages, chancellors out of clerks, and the white staff and blue ribbon bestowed as play things upon the lacquey and by blow.*"

Was this author to be credited in recounting any party matter, or in drawing any party character ? He might with equal truth and consistency, though not with equal policy, have informed his readers, that they had seen wonders still greater, " A Presbyterian retrieving the honour of the church ; a Dissenter, from taking notes at a conventicle, dictating at the council-table, and governing a High Church queen, by the merit of his superior zeal for the hierarchy ; that they had seen a barrister helping the crown to an heir ; the issue of a lawyer's daughter ruling three kingdoms ; the grand-daughter of chancellor Hyde holding the sceptre by hereditary and divine right ; a God's vicegerent upon earth descended from a Wiltshire justice of the peace !"

Such ugly, or such ludicrous lights, can much spite and a little wit, throw upon the highest and the noblest characters ; and so easy it is to make an ill draught of the best, yet one more pleasing to ill nature and ignorance than if it were just ! This is a work fitting every mean, every licentious genius ; 'tis not strange that it draws many adventurers, who to succeed, need only invent and rail, crack jests without wit, argue without sense, and assert without truth.

This was literally the undertaking, these literally the talents of Dyer and Roper, cotemporaries with the Examiner, and, without a grain of his wit, as much read as he. Their ribaldry, their blunt abuse and wooden satire, had many admirers. They diverted ale-houses, and kept alive the rage of party, which is too easily kept alive, when such wretches can serve the turn. Their reviling was called smartness ; their personal rancour was love for their country ; their stupid guesses, shewed their sagacity ; their forgery of facts, good intelligence. Even their contradictions and impossibilities were swallowed as facts and signs of deep foresight. All who had so nobly and for so many years supported the throne, were enemies to monarchy ; the bishops were pulling down the church ; the Dissenters governed all things, though none of them were employed. The whigs were bringing in the Pretender, as the

* Vide Examiner, Monday, January 12, 1712.

prelates were Presbytery. There were no Jacobites in the three kingdoms ; or the Jacobites were the queen's best friends, even when they thought themselves strong enough to place him upon her throne, and had actually attempted it. The Dutch were our worst enemies ; the French our truest friends. Popery was better than Presbytery. The Duke of Marlborough was neither a general nor a soldier, but certainly a coward ; Lord Somers was a sharer with Kid the pirate ; and a lunatic from Oxford was the saviour of the church.

These were the then prevailing doctrines and positions ; this the popular system of political belief, and these miserable authors the popular directors in politics. Ought not such extravagances, boldly published, greedily credited, and producing so much heat and delusion, and ill blood, to serve as a warning to all people that can but read and remember, how rash and dangerous it is to trust, and how much they ought to despise, false, hot, and abusive writers, who scatter calumny, imposture and ribaldry, only to serve the interest of a party, or their own interest ; who for this end stick at no abuse, no fastidiousness, and even torture facts into falsehood, and merit into dispraise ; who advance not what is true and healing, but what is mischievous and pleasing. The poor people are always their bubbles and property, and they live and prosper by deceiving them.

Nothing is more to the disgrace of such libels and libellers, than that they are most loud and current during public distraction and distress ; that they thrive best when the public suffers most, and when public distraction prevails. Popular discontents are their nourishment, and they the fuel of public discontents, which sometimes have no other.

A French Quack in London, when the plague raged at Marseilles, and was terribly apprehended here, swore, " That if the plague did but come hither, he should surely make his fortune." Had the same narrow, unfeeling genius been a penman in pursuit of fortune, or a firebrand of party, he would have rejoiced in popular commotions and the prospect of a civil war ; a season when pamphlets swarm most, and invectives fly faster ; when fury and uproar prevail, law is despised, the still voice of reason not heard, and all enormities are encouraged by impunity.

It would surely spoil the pleasure of a good citizen, when he is reading any lying and angry libel, to consider, that it is written purposely to deceive him, to make him a bad neighbour and a bad subject ; that it robs him of two valuable things, his time and tranquillity, and supposes him to be a dupe in leading-strings.

What can be a greater crime, what can argue a worse spirit, than, for vengeance, for a penny, or a place, to propagate discord and falsehood ? Not to care who is hurt, or what mischief be done, so the author be gratified, and the paper sell ? This is a proceeding too heinous to be aggravated, scarce credible, yet too common.

A public libel admits but of one alleviation ; I mean, when, with all its mischievous tendency, it is produced without malice. It was natural to pity the poor offending author, who excusing himself to a Secretary of State, for abusing the government, said, " He did it from no ill-will, but only for bread." When the Secretary asked him, *Why he did not then choose to write for the government ?* " Alas, my

Lord, said the scared calumniator, I shall then want bread, for then nobody will buy what I write."

It was not ambition, it was not ill-nature, that guided his pen ; and if he did any harm, he meant none. But when rancour and rage, or a greedy spirit, arms the hand of an author ; when he openly defies authority, belies and blackens those who bear it, and vilifies all their measures, not because they are wrong, though he may say so, but because they are theirs ; they only who are influenced and misled by him, are intitled to pity, but he himself to none.

Monsieur Patin, an eminent and witty physician at Paris, who had long seen the falsities and calumnies spread by the writers of news and politics, gives them a character suitable to his indignation ; *Genus hominum audacissimum, mendacissimum, avidissimum ut rem faciant*, "A most shameless, a most lying tribe ; most abandoned in pursuit of the penny." They indeed rarely consider what is right or wrong, but what will take. Is any good man unpopular, or to be made so ? They cry him down ; and then let him be ever so able, ever so virtuous, he is guilty and foolish. Is a worthless man popular, or is it worth while to make him so ? They cry him up ; and he has at once all merit, and every fine quality. The same pens which libelled a Tension deified a Sacheverell.

Is the popular humour for war ? Or does a cry for war answer any end of sedition or gain ? Does it hurt a man or a party they hate ? Or does it gratify the men and party they espouse ? Or does it quicken the sale of a libel ? They are presently loud for war, be it ever so unreasonable, ever so ruinous, and inveigh against all pacific men and counsels. Is the sound of peace in fashion, or serves any of the narrow and passionate purposes abovementioned ? They are vehement advocates for peace, let it be ever so premature, and the terms ever so scandalous. They then vilify all the managers and all the advantages of the war, and extol all who would make a ruinous peace. Is the peace solid and honourable, and they displeased and disappointed ? It must be shewn in hideous colours, and the people taught to hate it, and all that had any hand in it.

For, as all their strength and hopes lie in the credulity and mutability of the people, they always appeal to them, because they are always sure to deceive them. They have too short maxims : Whatever those whom they dislike attempt, is bad ; though it were to save the nation. Whatever promotes their party or their paper, is good ; though it threaten national destruction. The same pens which had inculcated passive obedience to a weak prince, barbarously trampling upon all law, excited rebellion against an able prince ruling benevolently by law. Could there be more daring impiety, or more shocking assurance ? And ought such memorable assurance and impiety ever to be forgot ?

What could the people think of such miserable guides, or of themselves, for not detesting them ? They indeed reap their chief security from oblivion. They bounce and rail for a day. Their productions are read and thrown aside. It is forgot that every next production of theirs contradicts their last. They praise and revile, they revile and raise, the same man in the short revolution of a moon, as if they ranged with it ; yet their inconsistency is not minded, because their

past labours are not remembered. Such labours survive not their date, and like the insects of a day, as they were formed for the day, they die with it.

Unhappily for one of these transient writers, who trusted to his talent in well timing a thing, as the phrase is, a reader of his caught him cruelly mangling in one paper, a character upon which he had lately bestowed much incense in another. This the gentleman happened to remember, though it was several days before, and knowing him, asked him, how could so much late merit deserve so much present satire. How! says the author; have you not heard the news? He has (naming a very honourable person, and cursing him,) "He has taken a place, and we" "are all just where we were." He meant, besides himself, many other candidates for places, who had long inveighed at all placemen, in hopes to remove and succeed them.

This is another shameless practice of such unfair and passionate writers, to represent all places as odious and even criminal; whilst they themselves are thirsting after them, and only rail at them because they cannot get them. This is always a proper answer to such malignant railers, and ought to be a constant antidote against their malignity. Nor can there be a greater disgrace to their readers, than to be at all influenced by such ridiculous prejudices and railing. Without the establishment of employments, of places and distinction, no human society can be established, no more than without magistracy and laws. Both these imply places as well as priority: and none but a mere mob, nor even a mob without intoxication, can dream of subsisting without the degrees of higher and lower, without places and inequality; and without government, or dream of preserving government without governors, without men in place and office; for the chief governor does but hold the chief place. Where there are laws, they must be executed; where there is authority, it must be administered; nor can either be done without hands, without ministers and officers, nor are these to be had without support, without places and recompences.

All this is so plain, that it is almost a shame to prove it; but it is a greater shame to those who make it necessary, and no small one to such as want such proof.

Human passions are too powerful for the human understanding. Where disgusts are strong, reason is weak. When we are brought to dislike the persons of men, we dislike their good fortune. When we come to envy their fortune, we dislike their persons; and whatever they have, whatever they do, we are apt to hate, when we hate them. In this unhappy turn and imbecility in human nature, lies the great encouragement and strength of libellers. They perceive how easy it is to make men think ill of one another; how natural it is to wish ill where we think ill, and to fall into the strongest prejudices for the silliest reasons.

An ancient baronet in Lincolnshire, who was fond of Nottingham ale beyond all other liquors, though no enemy to any, yet would never taste a drop of it, nor bear to hear it proposed, after the Lord Chancellor Finch, who had made a very just decree in his disfavour, was created Earl of Nottingham. From that moment and for ever, he conceived an inveterate aversion to that ale and that place, and, whenever he mentioned it, he called it in spite *Snottingham*; therefore often mentioned it.

We ought to be the more upon our guard against hasty censure and unreasonable piques, as we are prone to them. We ought to judge of men and their conduct with the more caution, because we are apt to do it with prejudice. This is the voice of humanity ; this is but Christian charity. We should read all writers with caution, but cannot arm ourselves with too much, when we read party-writer, or too scrupulously consider their drift and motives.

Every reader of those warm orators should ask himself, whether they do not speak from the passions as well as to the passions ; whether men in a flame can reason candidly, or see clearly ; whether an angry man can represent fairly ; whether what gives most offence, would give any, if it came from a different quarter and different men. Whether public complaints be not often breathed from griefs which the public does not feel, and might not be removed by a remedy which would not make the public easier. Whether one who gets a penny, by censuring the ministry, or hopes for a place by a change of ministers, knows state affairs better, or would conduct them better, than they, or would lose a penny by praising them, though they ever so manifestly deserved his praise. Whether one who collects news knows more of the condition of Christendom, than the secretary of state ; where either the dealer in news or in politics, would hurt his paper by generous truth and observation, or would not rather promote it by misrepresentations, and by ill natured and random censure ?

Whoever is the author of slander and invective, usurps the place of justice, awards judgment, and inflicts personal punishment ; a most unnatural judge, governed by his own evidence, decreeing in wrath, and condemning without bearing ! Cicero observing and censuring the scandalous, personal invectives allowed at Athens, even upon the stage, says, it was perhaps “excusable thus to lash popular incendiaries, and the sons of sedition ;” though it had been still better to have left them to the judgment of the tribunal, than that of a satirist. But to suffer such invectives against men in authority, was unpardonable.” He mentions Pericles, who held the chief. The same great author says, that to vilify and depreciate such as were intrusted with the administration of the Roman senate, was an attack upon the state itself, and consequently liable to the same construction and punishment.†

These scandalous scurrilities upon the persons of men, intolerable in any state, could not be always borne even in that of Athens. Even the Athenians, fond of licentiousness beyond any civilized nation, were forced to restrain it by a law. Horace, no enemy to just satire, observes, that its excesses upon the stage were so violent, as to require such restraint, as the natural effect and cure of liberty abused.‡ If this law, then and therefore made by the Areopagus, cramped the spirit of the comic and other writers, whom had they to thank but themselves ?

* Populares homines, improbos, in Repub. sediticosos.

† Majestatem minuere, est de dignitate, aut amplitudine, aut potestate populi, aut eorum quibus populus potestatem dedit, aliquid derogare. Cic. *de Invent. L. 2.*

‡ ———In vitium libertas excidit, et vim
Dignam lege regi ———

Hor de Art. Poet.

It was high time to have recourse to such a check, when Alcibiades, for want of a redress from law, for an attack upon his character in the poems of Eupolis, redressed himself by drowning the poet: terrible vengeance, as unjustifiable as what provoked it, but not surprising from a man of his great spirit, great quality, and public dignity, exposed to public scorn in a wanton lampoon! Both acted arbitrarily: Eupolis setting himself up for a judge and a doer of justice, assaulted the reputation of Alcibiades: just so reasoned Alcibiades,* and took away the life of Eupolis.

Thus ended the invective strains of the Greek poets; and ended in disgrace, as they had been exerted without mercy or bounds.† As their licentiousness had been extreme and shocking, the law was awful, and its penalties dreadful: by it the offenders were to be cudgelled; nay, cudgelled to death.‡

Michiavel's distinction between public calumny and public accusation, will always be just. Accusation infers facts and proofs, and proceeds by them. Calumny supposes every thing, and proves nothing: the less it demonstrates, the more it can invent, and charge the highest guilt upon the greatest innocence. It is generally addressed to the vulgar, and conceived in vulgar strains, such as none but the vulgar can approve or answer.

As the poor are apt to envy the rich, men of ambition to emulate men in power, the unfortunate such as flourish, 'tis natural for mean souls to bear spite to such as do not resemble them, and for bad characters to traduce good. This trade they easily monopolize. Such as they rival cannot rival them, and therefore they are unanswerable. Language like their own, which is the only proper language for them, is what no gentleman can return them. No well bred man is a match for a scold, nor will envy him the credit of excelling in his profession.

NUMBER 103.

The Subject of Libels continued.

THE first step to knowledge is to be sensible that we want it; and we must perceive the use of it before we know its value. The first step to guard ourselves against prejudices, is to be sure that we are subject to them. The next reflection ought to be, that it is as unjust in us to bear prejudices against others, as it is in others to bear prejudices against us.

If none but benevolent thoughts were entertained, no malevolent courses would be followed. Neighbours would not treat neighbours

* —Dolere cruento
Dente lacesiti.

† Jupiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.

‡ —Formidine fustis
Ad bene dicendum reducti.

*Hor. Epist. ad August.
Hor. de Art. Poci.*

Hor. Epist. ad Aug.

with odious names, nor charge those names and such who bear them, with criminal meanings, which are confidently imputed by one side, yet never owned by the other. Indeed, the whole drift of such names is to promote bitterness and strife. They are like weapons offensive, returning wound for wound, the reproach of fool for that of knave, and nickname for nickname. A tory is a guilty character to a whig; a whig is equally so to a tory; yet each is pleased with his own: they differ only in the construction, and are guarded by strong prejudices against making a true one, but so pleased with such prejudices, that they would be sorry to lose them. They find delight in hating the opposite characters, and in esteeming their own: a temper proper to perpetuate piques and feuds, and proof against all cure! The spirit of faction is civil rage not yet kindled into civil war, but ripe for it, supporting itself, and annoying its opponents by any means, however unfair and barbarous. So it do but succeed, it cares not how; and in order to it, its great aim will be to make the people hate and love improper objects upon false grounds.

It is a much easier task to raise a party spirit than to lay it, to inflame than to calm and extinguish. Very mean instruments serve to excite mutiny in an army, and discontents and sedition in a community, such as the ablest generals and the wisest magistrates cannot prevent nor compose. Two common soldiers raised such a furious uproar in a Roman army, as threatened the destruction of the commanders, and even of the emperor; nor did it end without infinite cruelty and slaughter. Yet the incendiaries worked up the soldiers to all this rage and disorder, chiefly by aggravating the common and necessary lot of soldiers, that "they were subject to duty and danger, and had no more pay than they were promised." Afterwards indeed, to feed their mad rage, they invented many calumnies, which all passed with the blind croud for truth and friendly information, and produced the murder of many of their officers, the ablest and most vigilant. Yet so many victims not satisfying the incendiaries, who still thirsted for more blood, especially that of the general, one of them openly charged him with the assassination of a dear brother, whom he never had: and nothing but this discovery, that the assassination was all imaginary and framed, and that the brother was just created, as well as just killed, saved the general from a real one.*

All crowds, in cities as well as in camps, are credulous, violent, easily misled, hard to be undeceived. Whilst their seducer is their idol, any man who would disabuse them is considered as their enemy, and in danger of being their victim. Their prejudice is blind to both, and teaches them, that in all this folly and mischief they are well advised, and righteously employed.

The drunken mob, who demolished houses of public worship in the late queen's time, thought such brutal impiety the work of God, and the crazy ecclesiastic, whose phrenzy inspired them, God's best ambassador. They adored this wretched popular meteor, and hated as he did, and because he did, the most amiable names and characters then in being, all moderate men; nay, moderation itself.

* See Tacitus, Annal I.

Neither is much art required in firing the many : every society, every condition of life, will readily find evils and inconveniences to complain of, losses and disappointments, public calamities, severe laws and taxes. Whoever rails loudest against those evils, however necessary and inevitable, is sure to be best heard by those who lie under them, and will be reckoned their special friend ; though, far from bringing them any relief, he only aggravates their sufferings by teasing and probing a wound which he knows he cannot heal : and could such as love him for being misled by him, see through his evil purposes or folly, they would soon change their fondness for him into another passion, and bear with patience what they must bear, be it ever so disagreeable, and they ever so angry. But he trusts to their rage, which he can so easily rouse, and fears not their reason, which they so seldom use, and he takes care they shall not.

Human society cannot subsist but at the expense of particulars, who must part with their blood as well as their money, when public want or distress calls for either or both. It would be a desirable blessing to be exempt from taxes and all public burdens, were the public secure without them——But, to be discharged from them, when the public must sink or perish for want of them, would be sacrificing all to save a part, which yet could not be so saved. Pericles told the Athenians, during the war with Lacedæmon, when the plague and other misfortunes had made them tired of the war, and uneasy with him, their general, that “ it was better for private men to suffer when the public prospered, than for private men to prosper when the public was in a state of decay ; because the private ruin even of thriving men is necessarily implied in the ruin of the public ; but when the public flourishes, private men are the more likely to flourish.”

As sickness and sorrow and death are the lot and conditions of natural life ; impositions, pressures, and payment are the inseparable terms of civil and social life. These however are all obvious themes for declamation, for tragical strains, and fine fuel for the passions, which are so awake and tender upon this head, that very coarse clamour and the most absurd orators, are able so to fire them, especially those of the unobserving multitude, too easily incensed with the sounds of property and liberty, even when most deceitfully and idly echoed. The present pique and sensation animates them, and when their blood boils, no great art is required to keep up the ferment. A dull lying libel, or a miserable couplet will do : for the present state of things seems always the worst to those that dislike it.

Wat Tyler's chief argument to his swarm of levellers, was such a couplet :

When Adam dived and Eve span,
Who was then a gentleman ?

Nor needed he any other to convince them, that they were all as good as their betters, and that there ought to be neither higher nor lower amongst the sons of Adam. In the tumult of their rage they were not aware, that if some were not above others, none could be safe, however obvious their own present proceedings made this observation.

It may seem wonderful that any number of men, much more than an hundred thousand men, should be found in a civilized country, all accustomed to the conditions of subordination and society, yet all at once

renouncing those conditions and all subordination, all agreeing to level all distinction, to open all the gaols, to set free and employ all criminals, to murder all judges, magistrates, and all men of rank ; to kill and rob all the industrious and wealthy, to destroy all their wealth, to burn all records, all archives, and writings, and thence abolish all knowledge, and to cancel all laws and restraints whatsoever ! Yet this spirit, raised by mean incendiaries, Wat Tyler and a few more, seized the commonalty, every where ; and the commonalty in order to remove grievances, ran into perdition.

Grievances is a word of endless extent and meaning ; nor where it signifies any thing besides the breach of laws, is it possible to fix it. The imprisonment of persons, the seizure of property, taxes imposed, lives taken away, or attempted, all against law, are grievances, and dreadful ones ; tragically felt here before the revolution, now happily abolished ; but again furiously threatening us. Under his present majesty we suffer no grievance which law forbids, and we enjoy all protection and security which law requires or humanity dictates. One of the most threatening grievances to a state, is public ingratitude for public benefits. The next to it, and the effect of it is licentiousness ; and both of them infer or presage all other grievances ; ungrateful and licentious language is followed naturally and too fast by ungrateful and licentious actions : men from *saying* what they please will soon learn to *do* what they please ; and the one is often intended to introduce the other.

There were many public grievances in Wat Tyler's time ; but his own was only personal, the insult of a brutal tax-gatherer upon his daughter : yet he became the idol of the multitude ; he was regarded as their deliverer, whilst he was leading them to outrages, poverty and the gallows, and under the cry of oppression was promoting public and private destruction. His followers were too blind and raging to ask him or themselves, " whether the rights and liberties of Englishmen could subsist ; whether human society could subsist, upon such terms, by the exercise of savage violence, by cancelling all rights, and by dissolving all society ? " We may easily conceive how, under such rage and infatuation ; such fondness for him and hatred to their superiors, they would have treated any man attempting to shew them into what a gulph he was leading them.

The consequence of this mad insurrection was a natural one, a cloud of martyrs to their own folly, and a wanton increase of power to the vicious court of Richard II. wantoning before in the abuse of power.

As the tyranny of a prince is licentiousness in one ; licentiousness in the people is the tyranny of all over their governors and one another ; and both prince and people, by grasping at more power and more liberty than they can manage, lose what they have. If it be madness in a prince to seek to be lawless, as I think it is, and do not remember one prince finding happiness in that unhappy pursuit ; it is rather more madness in the people to seek to be licentious. Single tyranny may last some time, and often does long ; but licentiousness, which is popular tyranny, must soon destroy itself, and generally leads to what seems most opposite to it, single tyranny.

When all are masters there can be no security, consequently no true liberty to any, much less any concord amongst all. Some subordina-

tion will soon be found necessary, and then he who can influence most by cajoling best, will soon come to sway all. And as the many are always blind to their favourite, as well as to those who are not so, they will be apt in their headstrong partiality to a new idol, and in their furious antipathy to his opponents, to compliment him with so much power (perhaps more than what they deposed, or would depose, his predecessor for claiming) that the same people who before thought all subjection to be slavery, will find themselves slaves instead of subjects, and probably not perceive the difference till 'tis too late to make it.

It is with liberty, as 'tis with power : It is always unsafe when it is excessive. The same limits that separate power and liberty secure both. Liberty is power in the hands of the people ; power is liberty in the hands of the prince. Unbounded liberty is as dangerous as unbounded power ; dangerous to the people, as well as to the prince ; and there is as much an end of liberty when the people can do what they please, as when the prince can. He who domineers over his superiors is as much a tyrant, as he who does so over his inferiors ; or more a tyrant, as the one only abuses his trust, the other both abuses and usurps it.

None of the Turkish emperors, terribly arbitray as they are, ever did, or ordered things more extravagantly arbitrary, than the ragged leaders of the rabble did at Constantinople in deposing their late emperor, and for some time afterwards, under the present. One of them, who owed a little money to a butcher (for a debt from a beggar could not be great) obliged the new Grand Seignor and the Divan, where this ragamuffin was then omnipotent, to invest his creditor the butcher with the principality of Wallachia. It was sound advice from the Cham of Tartary to the emperor and his ministers, upon this occasion, to humour the dirty popular chiefs, to let them do and say, swagger and dictate as they pleased, as the surest way of rendering them contemptible to the populace. They became so in a short time, and then due vengeance overtook them.

The same laws which intitle the people to protection from the crown, intitle the crown to obedience and reverence from the people, whilst the person who wears it observes these laws. Proportionable respect is by the same laws due to all the subordinate magistrates and ministers of the crown, who square their conduct by the law. To insult them is to defy law and justice. As 'tis defamation against the people to call in question their just rights ; 'tis defaming the crown and its ministers, to vilify and traduce them in the exercise of their regal and ministerial rights.

The meanest tradesman has a just claim of damages for scandalizing him in his dealings, and hurting his credit. Is there no crime in alarming the public by false imputations and calumnies wantonly thrown upon public counsels and public men ? Can trade go on, says an industrious citizen very justly, if men in trade are exposed to be undone by scandal and misrepresentation ? No. The lowest tradesman is therefore intitled to damages and amends for aspersions upon his character. Now as he who expects justice should do justice, would it not appear very unjust, and even surprising, to hear any of those tradesmen, so tender of their own character, aspersing and blackening that of their governors with equal freedom and folly, or cheerfully listening to those who

do ? They would prosecute any man for once treating them with the same freedom and acrimony. Could such traducers decently complain if they were prosecuted for throwing their invectives upon the first names in the nation ?

Can there be more partial dealing than this, or stronger proof of a prejudiced spirit, and of liberty abused ? Few men practise what even children know, that "we ought to do to every man what we would have all men do to us." Surely the character of a privy counsellor is as much the care of the law, as the character of a tradesman. Let me add another observation equally true and important, that "the surest way to lose liberty is to abuse it."

NUMBER 104.

The Subject of Labels continued, and concluded.

RUDE behaviour is allowed by all to be inexcusable ; yet it is by many often justified, when they see it used towards such as they dislike. Rude writing, still more unpardonable, is excused and commended, if it annoy those whom we wish to see annoyed. Thus what is universally condemned is occasionally approved. We always find a plea for what we love or hate, and reason is pressed into the service of the passions. It is not always true, that those who love the treason hate the traitor, at least whilst he is committing it. They then chiefly begin to hate him, when they no longer want him. It is the same with men of brutal manners, whether exercised with their tongues or their pens. Those who are pleased with their foul occupation will not immediately find their persons odious.

I have seen with concern a very sensible man not only pleased with a very ugly, very unlike character, merely because he hated the person for whom it was drawn, but heard him commend the miserable man who drew it, though he well knew him to be animated by malice only, and that it wanted all just resemblance of the original.

From such encouragement angry writers, particularly party-writers, are great dealers in characters, especially those of such eminent men whom they consider as their opponents. This practice, which requires the utmost delicacy and tenderness, is generally pursued without any, but, on the contrary, with apparent want of all charity, decency and truth. As 'tis their great drift to make men odious, their great study is to make them hideous ; and when they imagine that they have made a man appear bad, they think themselves justified in using him barbarously. They first labour to render him unpopular, then triumph, and sometimes live upon his unpopularity. For whoever is the object of their slander, is industriously and confidently set up as the object of public hate.

'Tis pity such wicked policy should have any success ; it is great pity it should have so much ; since the best men are often thus hunted

down by the rage and clamour of the worst; and exposed to real sufferings by the shameless cry and imputation of forged guilt.

A paper that once obtains to be popular, as many miserable papers have been, grows at the same time oracular, and all the falsehoods in it, like those uttered by the old Oracles, are believed without scruple or inquiry, because they come from thence; at least they are believed for a while, 'till they have had their effect, and the bad impressions are made; and they are the sooner made because they are bad. Most people, especially the lowest, are pleased to see exalted characters depressed, and bright characters sullied. This practice alone has served to make many low writers popular, and ingenious better writers still more popular.

If dull scurrility be pleasing, witty scurrility adorned with fancy and style, must be very pleasing. Even the best men, though they condemn it, are curious to see it, and cannot help being entertained with it.

This good reception of abuse and calumny will always be an encouragement to men of bad and bitter hearts to be pouring out their venom upon men of eminence and name. For abuse upon obscure men cannot have equal progress and effect. It is therefore the best policy in revilers to aim high. But though such policy may bring them money, and, if they are ingenious men, praise, it will be money basely earned, and but very partial praise, since whilst the wit is extolled, the application of it will be detested. And for dull scurrility, though it goes well with the rabble, the author will be taken for one of them, at least for a very dishonest man, if he have a capacity above them, and yet in such unmanly instances condescends to theirs.

No generous mind will blacken and wound merely because it can do so with safety. The terrors of the law, and the resentment of particulars, may be evaded by very dull skill and small arts. But a candid heart despises all crooked dealings, and scorns to offend truth and the persons of men, only because it can shelter itself behind evasions and reserves. Wherever all the world applies the spite of an author, there he will be believed to have intended it; and if he know so much, he is answerable for all the rest. A dash, or a foreign feature thrown into a picture, will be construed to proceed from the caution or cunning of the painter, and one stroke of likeness, though it infer no blemish, shall be found to correspond with every aggravated and ugly line in the whole piece. The ill nature of the author readily trusts to the ill nature of the reader, to find out who it is he means.

The finest poem may be burlesqued by a droll imitator, the straitest shape warped by a spiteful pencil, and the fairest character blackened by an ill-natured pen.

Such characters therefore, or any character, ought never to be attempted but by the most candid and impartial pens; such as those of party-writers never are, nor can be; yet none are so forward as they to make such attempts. Who would take the representation of any action, or the character of any person from those whose business it is to misrepresent, to praise, and to depreciate, to heighten, to lessen, and to blacken every action, and every person? They profess to direct the public choice, whom to hate and whom to love. They extol their own friends and measures only, condemn all the rest, and do both blindly,

Are such men to be credited ? Would any man now take the account of the times, and of those who lived in them, from Le Strange, Dyer, or Abel Roper ? Yet these men were once in great vogue, were much read, much credited by their different parties, and in a good degree guided their passions.

. Surely no man who is angry at another is fit to draw his character ; yet anger is generally the great call, often the great qualification, for such an undertaking ; an undertaking which requires great discernment, as well as a temper altogether cool and unprejudiced. Every angry man expects that you should be as angry as he, and would interest all men in his private griefs, which he therefore covers and recommends under public pretences and zeal : if you do not adopt his interests and passions, you are no longer a friend to your country, and must excuse him for representing you as an enemy to it.

Every one ought to take part with the unhappy and afflicted. Is a worthy man disappointed, or a sufferer upon any account ? It should be matter of concern to every man : but, if the public do not suffer too, we cannot sympathize with him upon the public account, though whilst he is under the agitation of his passions, which are always apt to darken and mislead the mind, he may imagine his cause and that of the public to be the same. Does a bad, a worthless, or an insignificant man, missing his unreasonable aims, complain that merit is neglected, and inveigh against such as have favours to bestow, for bestowing them better than upon him ? I do not conceive that the public, or any man in it, need be concerned otherwise than to condemn his assurance, for interesting the public, or any who regard it, in his private importance, Yet by such men the public is sometimes appealed to, its aid invoked, and the first and best men belonging to it aspersed and insulted.

Whoever is heartily disposed to speak ill of another, will easily find something to say ; or if he cannot find it, he may invent it—both facts and qualities are readily coined by a willing fancy, or blackened and aggravated by a malevolent heart. Proceedings the most advantageous to the people, may, by a malicious representation of them, or even by an unpleasing name given them, be rendered odious to the people. Measures the most mischievous to the people, may, by plausible and false colouring, be made dear and interesting to the people. The reformation, with all its tendency to rescue the people from darkness and thralldom, was far from being a popular undertaking. The infernal tribunal of the inquisition, with all its horrors, barbarity and flames, is adored as well as feared by the populace.

. A dealer in satirical characters is the most unfit person in the world to draw that of others ; for he is at once witness, judge and executioner, and utterly unqualified for the business which he professes. He shews the world that he is provoked, and thus furnishes the world with a good reason for not being provoked too, though it be his great aim to provoke the world to be as angry as he, and consequently as unfair. He his privately, perhaps mistakenly, piqued, and, scattering the envenomed arrows of his wrath at random, makes public victims of innocent and worthy men.

Who had a better or more adorable character than Socrates ? Yet the comic poet Aristophanes presented such a frightful picture of him

to the Athenians, and forged such false, but such a popular charge, of libertinism of opinion, against that divine person, only for entertaining notions of the Supreme Being derogatory to popular superstition, and to the plurality of gods at Athens, that they condemned him to die. The pious advocate for one God was put to death as an atheist. In the eyes of fools the highest wisdom is folly. The most sublime truths pass with a bigot for impiety; and blind guides have always most followers.

By this fate of Socrates, and the personal malice of Aristophanes, which then had its effect, the character of Socrates is not hurt, but that of his spiteful enemy greatly impaired. What aggravated his malice, is, that many of his plays were full of jests and buffonries upon the gods, and intended to expose them to public derision. What shameless assurance in such a man, a professed droll upon divine subjects, and even upon the divinities themselves, to accuse any man, especially so great and so good a man, for speculations about religion!

Mr. Dryden * gave a very pertinent answer to a Romish priest after the revolution, who wanted him to employ his wit against the Protestants. "Father, said the shrewd old poet, my zeal for you has already made me burn my fingers: I have long experienced, that one who believes the infallibility of a man, worships a wafer as his God, and trusts that you can create a deity out of dough, makes a ridiculous figure in attempting to ridicule any religious opinion, or any notion about religion, however ridiculous it be."

What characters are to be handled with tenderness and decency, if great characters be not, especially by private and obscure men? Virulence and calumny are no marks of guilt, except in him who utters them: and the heaviest charge in every libel falls upon the libeller. All the blots he makes in a fair character, are so many real ones upon his own; nor will any reasonable man expect truth and candour out of a mouth that foams with rage, and flows with spite. Ill will is a furious prompter; it delights in mangling characters, in pulling down the highest, in blackening the fairest, in distorting the uprightest, and in mis-representing all.

If an impartial hand were to draw that of the chancellor Clarendon, he would appear to have been an able minister, the cool conductor of the restoration; successfully employed afterwards in the service of the crown; a true friend to the constitution, a patron of the church, with Christian temper towards Dissenters; zealous for the true interest of the king, and kind to his adherents; equally vigilant for that of the laws, in opposition to sycophants and unworthy favourites, who in flattery to the person of the king, were undermining his authority, by setting it above the laws, which were its safest and only support.

This was his true character. A far different, and a shocking one was given him by the hot party men, his enemies. Upon that great public change, as all the cavaliers expected favour and places, there

* Mr. Dryden having turned Papist, or pretended to do so, in king James's time, to demonstrate his sincerity, and himself a good courtier, wrote the *Hud and Panther*, in defence of Popery; a poem which had some good lines in it, but much weak reasoning; which was soon after answered in a conversation between the *City Mouse and Country Mouse*.

were twenty candidates for one preferment ; and as some employments still remained, for reasons of state, in the hands of the late possessors, every disappointed cavalier became a furious malecontent, and a mortal foe to the chancellor. A cry was soon raised against him, as neglecting the king's friends, hugging his enemies, and tampering with the Presbyterians. That cry increased and spread, and those imputations were fast followed by more and blacker. He was corrupt in office, an enemy to the king, whom he had faithfully served, and just restored, and a traitor to the state, which he had so lately saved. All who railed at him because they were out of place, persisted to rail 'till they got in, and looking upon him as their enemy, stuck at no means to destroy him. Were such men capable of any fair conviction, of doing justice to his great merit, or even of seeing any in him ?

Was the treasurer Godolphin ever fairly represented by the tories, after he employed the whigs ? Was his successor ever truly painted by the whigs, when he appeared at the head of the tories, or by the tories when they fancied him still leavened with whigism ? Were they not both the buts of infinite scurrility ? Folly was found in their wisest counsels, malignity and mischief in their fairest intentions ; the meanest libellers, who knew the least of them, had the most to say against them ; and there was no end of libels in all shapes, in pamphlets and songs, characters and queries. Such is the condition of human life, such is the lot of human society, that for a pique or a joke, or a little gain, public tranquillity is risked, and the greatest persons worried and belyed.

The late Duke of Marlborough will ever be a name of immortal renown to the English nation ; the wisest counsellor, the greatest general of his time, equal to those of any time ; superior in the cabinet and the field, not only to public enemies, but even to fortune and faction ; but exposed to popular hate and scorn, by the pestilent breath of libellers and the gall of party ; all his merit and fame, all his victories and laurels unable to support him against invectives and whispers ; he triumphing abroad over a power dreadful for half a century to all Europe, and impotent calumny triumphing over him at home ; his many victories and conquests, many of them unbloody, all of them complete and glorious, decried as idle and even destructive, all by the same men, who had before celebrated him as victorious without loss of men ; *Sine clade victor*.

These instances sufficiently shew, that the highest services may be decried, the best men traduced, and the greatest merit rendered unpopular, by prejudice and clamour, by very low means, and by very mean instruments.

In all great changes, during all public ferments, and public difficulties, war subsisting, new taxes imposed, or old ones increased, trade decreasing, great events expected, great attention raised, many hoping, many fearing, more disappointed than gratified, all prone to censuring, if public measures fall wrong, as the best may, they will be believed to have been concerted wrong, at least so represented, and thus the wisest be made unpopular. Nor is innocence and ability any defence against popular clamour, though raised by art and malice, and spread by credulity and folly. Even the best counsels are most hateful to such as hate the authors of them.

The sum of a malicious character may be true, the facts true, yet the character falsely drawn, by aggravations thrown in and multiplied; by facts omitted, or half stated, or untruly stated; and the whole character in itself blameless and amiable, shall appear hideous by these aggravations and omissions.

Ridicule, when 'tis outrageous, is itself ridiculous; that is, when it adds facts and colours, omits the best features, and invents bad ones. Sometimes malice alone draws and falsifies the whole character, yet confidently represents it for true.

Under this liberty taken with characters, the most unexceptionable can never be safe. They who take it are to be considered as the *Car-nifices gloriæ*, as the levellers and assassines of great merit and fame. It can belong only to the lowest and the worst characters to blacken the highest and the best.

The accomplished Adrianus Turnebus, a name zealously celebrated by Scaliger, Thuanus, and all the able pens of his time, deserves more applause from his own short and true testimony concerning himself, than from all his learned writings, numerous and excellent as they are. "It has, says he, been always a caution with me, tenderly and sacredly observed, never to shew any inclination to advance my own fame, by blasting that of any man."*



NUMBER 105.

The Absurdity of Jacobitism, the Impiety of Popery, and the Enthusiasm of Party.

WE have seen the happy issue of an unhallowed rebellion, which was the genuine offspring of Jacobitism, Jacobitism not owned, but carefully recommended under the venerable and popular name of patriotism. A shameless disguise! Jacobitism abolishes patriotism. The latter is supported by truth and reason and liberty, and it supports them. Jacobitism is founded in nonsense: it sets up a name against the constitution, against the eternal lights of nature, the welfare of society, and all the rights of men. It is defended just as Popery is defended, by frauds and impossibilities. There is not more nonsense in the infallibility of a friar, than in the indefeasibility of a Pretender; and the Papal apostolic succession is not a greater absurdity, than the Pretender's hereditary succession: A position which infers the denial of a Providence; and is a charge upon the Deity of leaving human affairs to roll at random; or, which is as bad, to be conducted by children and madmen, by bigots, who are the most dangerous idiots; or by fools

* Hoc semper religiose cauteque servavi, ne mihi per cujuscunque injuriam, viderer unquam humanum querere voluisse.

Adrian Turneb. *Adversar.*

prompted by impostors. That a Pope can never err, is a proposition as rational, as that a tyrant cannot forfeit.

The voice of Jacobitism is therefore the same with the voice of Popery, to give up our senses: And it is as consistent to believe that Almighty God may be made out of dough, as that a good ruler, a character that implies wisdom and largeness of heart, could be found in the narrow and undiscerning genius of king James, a blind bigot to pious cheats, and crazy for tyrannical rule. And what better can be expected from those who inherit his principles and his blood?

Jacobites do with patriotism, as papists do with religion: They profanely prostitute the name to abolish the thing. What resemblance is there between the meek Jesus of Galilea, and the imperious impostor at Rome, who claims the triple crown of heaven and earth and hell, as heir to one who had not a place where to lay his head? Do the Cardinals, those pompous and princely prelates, resemble the poor wandering apostles? Or does a mass-book bear likeness to any of the gospels? What single life did Christ or his apostles take away, even of their enemies and persecutors? His pretended vicar has murdered millions, chiefly the true worshippers of the Lamb.

How dare a Jacobite defile the sacred name of patriotism, when he would leave the gospel to the cruel mercy of a tool to the Pope, and all the laws of liberty to a professed enemy to law? It was objection sufficient against the late intruder, that he claimed upon the right of an outlaw. This was his chief claim amongst the Highlanders; and as any fraud can cheat savages, the fraud of hereditary right (as great a one as any in Popery) inspired and armed them. Yet the cry of patriotism, which was echoed as loud, was a flat contradiction to it: But the spirit of faction, blinded by rage, perceived not the contradiction. If he meant to rule by law, and there founded his right, he quitted his title from blood. If he adhered to his descent from king James, why alledge a right from law, which king James scorned and overturned? Besides, we are already governed by law; every act of government was warranted by express law; and no law violated or stretched in any one instance.

The truth is (if men mad with party could see truth) certain chiefs who thirsted for a share of power, and could have none, 'till they had destroyed those who held it, were determined to overturn all power, in order to grasp all. Their hereditary bondmen, proud of that infamous tie, zealous in proportion to their brutality, brutal in proportion to their blindness, followed their chiefs, led by the force of vassalage and hopes of plunder. Any bread was better than none; and the English climate was better than their own. Their chieftains further animated them with the cant of loyalty: Their preachers (the nonjurors and other Popish priests) fired them with a call from God; and the most potent cheat was fetched from religion.

The religion of thieves and savages, embraced upon wicked principles, and managed by impious guides, increases their ardour for robbery and other acts of barbarity. Their enemies, that is, whomsoever they mean to rob, are all Egyptians; and their leaders assure them of the high and godly merit of spoiling the Egyptians. The example of the Jews is a warrant to the Highlanders, to serve the good subjects of king George as the Jews did the naughty subjects of king Pharaoh.

Those who have no religion but what knavish leaders teach them, had better have none. He who has no religion will not do mischief for the sake of religion. He whose religion prompts him to mischief, is the worse for his religion. The Highlanders, whilst they were committing treason and robbery against God and the king, thought themselves serving both, and entitled to the blood and property of all good subjects, who refused to commit the same damnable outrages. They were persuaded by their impostors, that they themselves were all patriots, and that it was patriotism to rob and kill, to overthrow the government, and to promote confusion. They were so heated and enchanted, that whilst they were all gasping after places, they inveighed aloud and without measure against places and placemen ; meaning the present possessors. This trick and cry they had long learned from the Times, and from certain disinterested patriots, who by such cant really meant no advantage to the Highlanders, but only courted help and support from the Highlanders and all men, nor scrupled to accept it from the worst.

These wild partizans, educated on hills and in caves, as fierce as wolves, as ignorant as cattle, were furnished with cant, which they called reason. They talked of right and usurpation, always took one for the other, and held opinions against fact and sense. A miserable mob, naked of instruction as well as of covering, would be judges of all things, reason, power and property, would overthrow an establishment made by the three estates, reverse public wisdom, and reform by destroying. Wretches bred in nastiness and ignorance, and all immorality, were to purify the state, and to restore religion.

Such is the spirit of party, generally as furious as blind, as catching as enthusiasm, and as incurable. I shall therefore here subjoin some observations upon the enthusiasm of faction.

To persist in a false opinion is obstinacy or stupidity. To urge religion for the support of a false opinion is enthusiasm or knavery. The latter generally governs the former. The designing man makes a property of the weak man, improves that weakness to serve himself, and directs well-meaning zeal to mischievous ends. When a man is once persuaded that he is moved by the Spirit of God, or serving the cause of God by the direction of men that come from God, he wants no further incentive to pursue the most daring courses, and to do the most desperate actions ; all in defence of such a divine cause, and in obedience to such divine monitors.

A person who concludes himself in the direct road to paradise, and intitled to the best place in it ; who sees God and angels applauding him, and heaven open to receive him, will avoid no pain or peril, racks or gibbets, in his way thither. What is momentary pain, even the keenest and most various, to the joys of everlasting bliss ? If present interest and gratification be superadded, with power and pre-eminence enjoyed or expected ; such happiness possessed here, together with the sweet assurance of perfect happiness and glory hereafter, must transport him irresistibly. He is above all human impulse, even humanity itself. His cause is more than human, and he thinks himself allowed, nay called, to sacrifice to it whatever is human, to crush society, and to butcher men. He considers himself as the ally and chosen instrument of the Almighty, and then all his enemies are God's enemies ;

whatever opposes him opposes God ; and whilst he is rioting in murder, and wading in blood, he is only fighting God's battles, executing God's vengeance, and shewing himself the champion of the Lord.

The enthusiasm of party is often as violent as the enthusiasm of superstition ; either of them inflames the heart, fills it with wrath and antipathies, and banishes charity and mercy. When both sorts meet in the same person, as they often do, his madness and fury is extreme ; as he damns you from a spirit of fanaticism, he would hang you from a spirit of faction. Papists and Jacobites are dreadfully animated with this double spirit of temporal and eternal vengeance : a spirit of which England and the whole Christian world have been often and long the bleeding witnesses. Every man, who is not so mad as themselves, and opposes their fury, is the certain object of it : he is a traitor and a heretic, worthy of a gibbet and everlasting torments.

In the most Catholic countries they have opened a present hell ; nor can the infernal spirits invent a worse ; I mean the inquisition, where human sacrifices are daily offered ; where human bodies, after a merciless series of ghostly terrors and tortures, are consigned to perish alive in flames here, and human souls to live in eternal flames hereafter : the most sincere professors, such as cannot lie to God, nor to their conscience, to their Bible and to common sense, are the most constant fuel there. The impious managers commit a double insult upon the living God, by trampling upon all his commandments, and blasphemously claim his name and authority, in openly defying his word and all his attributes. They barbarously burn God's innocent creatures for God's holy cause. Could they affront the good God so much by believing that there was no God ? To make him the patron of pestilent cruelty and fraud, is in effect to deny him, and worse.

Yet many of these pernicious deceivers are themselves deceived. They are persuaded that they serve heaven in these their hellish doings ; a persuasion which makes them tenfold more the children of darkness and iniquity. They at least instill their anti-christian whims into the heads and hearts of their dark followers, who swallow eagerly and blindly all the glaring forgeries of their reprobate guides as the dictates of the Deity, however expressly forbid and abhorred by the Deity. Tender children and ladies in Spain, who shed tears for the execution of a murderer, exult at the canonical murder of an heretic, or a Jew, burned for adhering to his conscience and his Bible, the best and only directors in religion, and the only acceptable way of worshipping God. This reversing of religion is called religion : Christian charity is extinct ; enthusiasts are gratified, and anti-christian impostors prosper.

The cause of king James and of Popery was one and the same. He strove to introduce Popery, and Popery always produces an expulsion of Protestants. He overthrew the laws and set up tyranny. As a Papist and a tyrant, he pursued the destruction of Englishmen. Upon what principles could an Englishman defend him, as many of them did ? By no principle of reason, but by something much more powerful with them, a spirit of faction and enthusiasm. They alledged his hereditary right, because he had kings for his predecessors. Has any man any right to perjury and usurpation ? Have not all men a right of self-preservation, to defend themselves from destruction, and to disable the de-

destroyer? A dumb man cannot be successful as an orator, nor a handi-
to a professor of law or divinity. King James's tyranny was political
lunacy, a worse qualification than natural dumbness. There are her-
editary professors of divinity in Germany; but I never heard that one
of them, though born mute, or falling into lunacy, had a right to eat
for himself, and to read lectures in theology.

The only natural way of defending that weak, bewitched prince
was what I once heard offered by a country gentleman, ungenerally a
Jacobite, for he had a great estate: He concluded all his arguments
with the best, and confirmed it by a warm oath. "That he was to have
gone ambassador to Spain, if king James had continued to reign in
England."

The keenest zealots for king James, such as were the foremost in all
plots to restore him, had, at his first flight, when he was taken as a fe-
gitive at Rochester, approved themselves his most sanguinary enemies.
When it was debated in council at the cockpit, how he should be treat-
ed, a brace of bishops, afterwards high non-jurors, and, in their own
conceit, confessions for his cause, proposed to have him used as his father
had been used.

His cause was never the better nor the worse for their testimony;
passionate and selfish, first and last. In both humours, however repug-
nant to one another, the prelates probably thought themselves warrant-
ed by religion as all enthusiasts do. For enthusiasm is never without
its selfish side; and its interested views are not always confined to
heaven alone, though their hopes there still terminate in dear self.

The Indian Bramans, the greatest martyrs to voluntary mortification
upon earth, entertain most selfish and ambitious hopes in all that they
painfully suffer. In all their flights and excesses of penance, hanging
by the hair of the head upon the branches of trees; or upon sharp iron
hooks fastened in their flesh, till the bold be torn, and their bodies drop;
always naked; often starving; never sitting down; for years together
constantly exposed to all the elements; scorched by a burning sun;
devoured by insects; at the mercy of beasts of prey; their limbs
painfully distorted into unnatural postures, and never suffered to return
to their former position; they all the while foster the weening consola-
tion of revisiting the world after death, under the sublime character
of great lords and princes, higher or lower, according to the degree of
their former penance.

There are persons now alive, who remember several English Bram-
ans, living under strict and lasting penance for king James; some who
had laid themselves under a curse, never to change their cloathes;
others never to shave their beards or heads, till he regained his crown.
So that you might have seen men covered with hair; others with no
covering at all; all comforting themselves with a glorious and speedy
deliverance from their present roughness and nakedness. For, I do not
remember any Jacobite, though ever so well reconciled to razors and
taylor's, but he was within three months at furthest of the Pretender
and preferment. The experience and disappointments of half a centu-
ry have not been able to cure them of their hopes. Enthusiasm is a
frensy: time, facts and reason are no remedies against it. Whilst
the enthusiast lives he believes, and sometimes adores his idol as alive,
long after 'tis dead. The duke of Monmouth was confidently believed

by many to be alive forty years after he had lost his head ; and probably some believe so still.

Distress naturally leads to enthusiasm : oppression and persecution are its common parents. It is roused by favourite hopes disappointed, or eagerly entertained ; by lasting resentment, or by any other settled passion. The enthusiastic spirit, an hundred years ago, which spread so fast, assumed so many shapes, and did such wonders in all shapes, was first raised by the tyranny of the court, and the cruelty of the hot clergy. 'Twas to a Laud that the nation owed an Oliver. The Puritans, mercilessly used, applied ardently to God to deliver them from an oppressive government, and a domineering vindictive priesthood. As they thought their cause just and pious, their sufferings barbarous and irreligious, they came to have hopes, then confidence, at last firm assurance, that the God of mercy would succour godly sufferers. No wonder that they were glad to help him to the means, and to become his ready instruments to help themselves.

Thenceforward all their doings were the Lord's doings ; they themselves were his only people and favourites ; to oppose them was to oppose God, though their ways were far from resembling his ways. They particularly persecuted others as bitterly, as if they themselves had never suffered the bitterness of persecution, which is every where the bane of religion, and the refuge of impostors, at best of enthusiasts.

Such were the roundheads, who, however, as they preserved a good outside, sobriety and fair appearances, gained popular credit and sway, partly from the opposite deportment of the clergy, who had long behaved with great haughtiness and little exactness. Perhaps it is well that they had not behaved better. Had they added strictness of life and laborious preaching to their detestable and enslaving doctrines, England might have been under slavery still, as it was for many years to the bigotted prince whom they mocked with the name of martyr ; which name was a confession, that he perished by trusting to their wicked doctrine, and supporting their ridiculous chimeras.

The suffering cavaliers, of course, turned enthusiasts too, but enthusiasts of another sort. They were enraged to see their adversaries prospering and victorious. They therefore, in the heat of their resentments and their cups, used to treat the Almighty very opprobriously, and even with execrations, for deserting the church and monarchy, in favour of fanatics and republicans. They little apprehended, that they themselves were then behaving like fanatics possessed. Fanaticism is never on one side. The best apology that can be made for Laud, and for his brethren in bigotry and spirit, is, that they were as great fanatics as ever persecuted ; for all persecution is fanaticism or imposture : at best it is terrible extravagance ! Consciences are no more to be shaped than air and weather. When Charles the First pleaded his conscience (as he did in the affair of Episcopacy) he forgot how little he had regarded that plea from thousands, in points of at least equal tenderness. But few men are so religious or reasonable as to allow what all men plead, with reason and Christianity on their side.

After the restoration the same mad merciless spirit seized the hot clergy again, though they had been undone by it before. In treating the Dissenters as fanatics, they shewed themselves raging fanatics, and were the blind instruments of Popery to destroy both church and Dissen-

ters. Their zeal and declamations for passive obedience to a prince inwardly a Papist, outwardly a profligate, and passionate for tyranny, were flights of madness and enthusiasm, if they were in earnest: if they were not, they merit a worse character. All the shocking violence of his reign were not only defended, but hallowed. So were those of his brother, till the poor undiscerning sovereign, trusting to this very doctrine, like a flaming enthusiast for Popery and tyranny, touched the altar. Then, and not till then, they who had seen, with unconcern, nay, with approbation, law and liberty destroyed, life and property seized, by mere will, became enthusiasts to interest, and gave up the monarch, or rather preached him down.

How the same set of enthusiasts (for I speak only of the violent, the persecuting and the lawless) behaved in the next reign, with what dreadful contempt of their oaths and deliverer, I forbear to explain here, as I shall hereafter explain it. The best that can be said for them, is, that they who had been fierce enthusiasts for Popish and arbitrary princes, became enthusiasts, more fierce, if possible, against a virtuous Protestant prince, scrupulously defending the Protestant religion and the laws, and the restorer of both.

In the late reign the same devilish lawless spirit of enthusiasm made terrible efforts, and had nigh produced as terrible events; but for the Protestant succession, and restored tyranny and Popery.

What has revived the same attempt at this day, but the dreams, the enthusiasm of hereditary right? Who have revived it but enthusiasts, zealous to support it, at the expence of religion and liberty, and the utter overthrow of the nation? They were enthusiasts intoxicated with their own merit, transported with ambition, urged by necessity; implacable exiles; forfeited traitors eager to be restored; fine titles and preferments, all extremely wanted; laws of their own making; a king of their own crowning; plenty in room of penury; liberty and ease instead of flight, gaols and executions; distress changed into prosperity; misery into happiness; gloominess into gaiety; honours cancelling disgrace; all good things wanted into all good things possessed!

What an enchanting prospect! Well may it have roused the needy clans; opened their cold huts; prompted ragged heroes to arm and eat, to espouse fanatic, but lucrative loyalty; to draw the broad sword, to brace the target, to promise themselves a southern Canaan, and to destroy all who opposed such a glorious adventure. What could be more tempting, than to gain a comfortable covering and some cows, or money to buy them, by restoring loyalty, and making their fortune in the cause of God; a cause espoused by the Pope, supported by France and Spain, and thus recommended to a free Protestant nation?

I shall illustrate the whole of this head with the example of a Highland gentleman, bred to arms, and in hereditary principles. At the head of a party of his clan, all armed, he invaded several farms at some distance, plundered them of all, and particularly drove off all the cattle. He was taken, tried and executed, in spite of all that he could urge in his justification: for at his trial, this pleasant gentleman robber, not only pleaded *Not guilty*, but persevered in this his plea to the last, even at the gallows: he was hanged in obstinate innocence, and in his own opinion died a martyr. He said that he had made fair war, open-

ly in arms, with a piper before him. Perhaps too he had the chevalier's commission in his pocket, as other such innocent robbers have had since.

NUMBER 106.

The Letter of Monsieur D'Argenson to Mynheer Van Hoey, and that of the Mynheer to the Duke of Newcastle, paraphrased.

THERE can never be too much justice done by Englishmen, to the person and late performance of that wonderful statesman and patriot to his country, Mynheer Van Hoey. Sure I am, that the following paraphrase will appear a just representation of the French minister's letter to him; such a letter as no minister but a French minister could have written; nor even a French minister have ventured to have written to any foreign minister, but Mynheer Van Hoey. The French letter is indeed truly French, a complete specimen of French insolence and French pedantry, and hath not its fellow in history, nor even amongst the *Epistolæ Obscurorum Virorum*.

Monsieur D'Argenson's Letter to Mynheer, or rather Monsieur, Van Hoey, in genuine English.

MONSIEUR,

THE king has commanded me to write to you, as the only proper neutral minister, either capable or willing to oblige his majesty upon so nice and unheard of a trial. Indeed his majesty does not consider your excellency as a neutral ambassador, but rather as a neutral advocate for him and his interest.

Every body knows, Monsieur, at least you do, that the young Pretender is the king's cousin, though the English nation allow his father to be nobody's cousin, as his real parents were unknown, and his pretended parents were outlaws. Now as the English troops have gained some advantage over him, by destroying many thousands of his invincible followers, and routing them all, at the desperate expense of near fifty killed on the other side, this young prince, who had the true courage to despise danger so much as never to appear in it, is by it intitled to the favour of all powers who can esteem him for it, especially to the favour of the king of England, whom he only strove to detrone. Moreover, the brave English nation cannot but shew high affection to that wandering prince their countryman, whom they do not own, one so personally mild, as to fight with no man that would fight with him; one who advanced so daringly whilst there was no opposition, and so tenderly shunned the sight of blood.

These, Monsieur, are unanswerable reasons for mercy, and even for generosity towards this harmless brave young prince, especially from the king of Great Britain, who had nothing to fear from him but

the loss of his life and crown, with the liberties, wealth and blood of his subjects. The same powerful arguments must have equal force in procuring pardon to the adherents of the said young prince as they did no more than rebel, and only endeavoured to overthrow a naugbly constitution, and to spoil and subdue English republicans, for the service of France their good friend and ally.

It was therefore but natural in them, and their duty, to follow the said young prince's standard, set up by France. That young prince has to urge in his own behalf, that when the duke of Cumberland attacked and overturned that standard, the above brave prince never once appeared to support it, but behaving like his genuine ancestors, and yielding to his and their great complaisance and humanity, hastened with horror from the uproar of slaughter and a bloody field. What though his followers broke the laws and defied their sovereign and the living God? It was all done in a time of confusion, which they themselves had raised: it is therefore reasonably hoped, that these poor rebels, the more to be pitied for being implacable, will be subjected to no prosecution or rigour.

The king desires you, Monsieur, to represent to the English ministry the great inconveniency it will be to the French king, if his cousin be imprisoned and the rebels hanged; as neither he nor they have done more than was for the advantage and glory of that king. If they have forfeited their lives by the laws of England, yet his majesty hopes to find nothing worse than pardon and benignity towards them from the king of Great Britain, whom they strove, by the aid of the French king, to sacrifice to France and Popery. It will be highly generous in his Britanic majesty, to extend the utmost lenity to such who attempted to dethrone him, in justice to a family which does not exist in the English annals, but a family espoused by the French and the Highlanders.

But if, contrary to the expectation and interest of France, the said young prince be laid in durance, or his worthy adherents be hanged, it is easy to apprehend that the French king will be angry; that he will do, what he has already done, and is doing daily, even all the harm he can to the king of England; that if the king of England pretend to hinder him from doing more, and will not so much as pardon his implacable enemies, the good emissaries of France, still zealously bent to set France against the king of England; then will the French forces, during the war, certainly kill all the English, who will let them. It is too certain, Monsieur, that if the English king do not spare the English and Scotch rebels, raised, animated, and fed by France, it will discourage all rebels in every county in Europe, either to serve or to trust France, whenever she has occasion to raise rebellion; and will therefore be a bad example set to all Europe against France. The king of England cannot but know, what a sincere love the king of France has for the Stuarts; a family who so long faithfully sacrificed England to France.

No man, Monsieur, is fitter, no Frenchman is fitter than yourself, to act this extraordinary part, for the honour of France. Your long partiality to France; your known zeal for any peace which may be most for the honour of France; and your wonderful talents, so long the admiration of all Europe, as well as of your own country, will rouse your uncommon spirit and eloquence upon this important French project.

Your Excellency, Monsieur, must be quick in your application, else dungeons, axes and halters, will be the immediate portion of the best friends that France has in England. Pray let me have your answer from the English ministry, that when that awful and profound genius, the monarch my master see it, he may set his sublime wit to work, how to wreak more vengeance upon England.*

In the mean time, Monsieur, he graciously condescends to wish, that the king of England may humbly submit to grant him whatever he desires, and give him particularly this mark of submission and awe.

A Second Letter from that uncommon Genius, Monsieur D'Argenson, to that no less uncommon Minister, Monsieur Van Hoey, directing him how to instruct and terrify the English Ministry, upon another Affair of great moment to France.

You cannot but know, Monsieur, what great and daily advantages accrue to France from the continual importation of English money for French commodities, wines, brandies, silks, brocades, laces, cambricks, &c. and what essential detriment the exportation of English coin must be to our enemies the English. His majesty, who is sensible with what true pleasure your excellency must have observed this, commands me to desire you, to acquaint the English ministry, how sincerely his majesty interests himself in this affair. Every body knows, that the smugglers are his true friends, and how much his honour and profit is concerned to protect their persons, and to study their prosperity. Now, as there are certain hard and unreasonable laws subsisting in England against these his good friends and confederates, who only seek their own advantages in a trade which they bravely risk their lives and fortunes to carry on ; and as they are, for such their brave and desperate behaviour, intitled to the favour of all brave men, the king my master reasonably hopes, that all the said hard laws against them will be suspended ; that a practice which is only pernicious to the trade and interest of England, may not be abolished or even rendered useless, nor the resolute followers of it to be subjected to the rigor of prosecution.

These, Sir, are cogent reasons to abolish the laws against smugglers ; to soften the king and Parliament of England in their favour, and to procure them all tenderness from the brave English nation, which they have the courage to defy and to rob. They do but follow the impulses of their wants and industry, and seek the glory of being rich at the expence of their country. Whilst they are under such potent temptations to break the laws and peace, and to terrify and command the coasts, they are surely intitled to the just admiration of all Frenchmen, and to the commisseration and generosity of all Englishmen. It will be a particular mark of generosity in his Britannic majesty, to shew lenity to such courageous offenders, who rob his revenue, kill his officers, and spurn his authority under foot.

* This bodes something very terrible. I hope he will not send that lively and ingenious youth, the Dauphin, to meet the Duke of Cumberland in the field.

" But if, contrary to all expectations, smuggling be punished, and smuggling suppressed, then will the king of France be angry and disappointed, and frown, and threaten to hurt England more than he can; and it is a melancholy truth, Sir, that if severity be used against English smugglers it will discourage smugglers all over Europe, thus assisting and enriching France, by hurting and exhausting their own country.

" The king of England cannot but know the sincere friendship the French king bears to the smugglers, and to all other English criminals and traitors, who have served him so usefully against their native country.

" You are, Sir, the fittest man, and the only likely minister living to exert your singular parts and industry, and to display your matchless eloquence and piety, upon this great point, so interesting to France. Your excellence will please to be quick; the smuggling may be checked, and smugglers imprisoned. His majesty, ever fond of glory and universal submission, pants to see your answer from the English ministry, that he may be prepared to support his power by protecting smugglers and outlaws, as well as in exciting and employing them for the honour of his court and reign, all over the world. He heartily wishes, that the crown of England may be so courteous and wise, as, for the honour of France, to spare smugglers.

" I have the honour to be, with profound regard, Monsieur, &c.

" N. B. It is whispered at Paris pretty confidently, and universally believed there, that Monsieur D'Argenson, thinking nothing too arduous for his abilities, especially when assisted by those of Myndeer Van Hoey, intends, when he has gained, or rather commanded, his point for the rebels and smugglers, to require a cessation of the penal laws in England against Papists, and then an instant restoration of Popery.

The incomparable Letter of that inimitable Statesman, Myndeer Van Hoey, to his Grace the Duke of Newcastle.

MY LORD,

I HAVE the honour to transmit to your excellency, a letter from Monsieur D'Argenson to me; a letter containing such a strain of politics as none but a refined French politician could have sent to me; and I am fond of the writer, and pleased with the drift of it. It is to apply to the Protestant king of Great Britain, the good ally of the States General, my masters, in behalf of the Popish Pretender to his throne, and of the Pretender's adherents, the rebels; since they have been defeated by the duke of Cumberland, in their attempts to dethrone the king his father, to extinguish the line of Hanover, and to enslave the English, all by the deep counsels and succours of France.

The French ministers, who have long known me to be their friend, and treated me differently from all foreign ministers whatsoever, as indeed they have found my behaviour different from that of all other ministers; have done me the credit to trust me with what no other minister would undertake, or be asked to undertake.

They know how long and zealously I have contended, that all nations should implicitly submit to make peace with France, because otherwise France would never have done making arbitrary war upon all nations. They therefore judge me fit to forward the commands of France to the king of England, for shewing favour to the young Pretender, because he had the courage, by the persuasion and assistance of France to attempt to dethrone the king of England; the courage to submit to go upon that French exploit, to venture his person in a single ship, to seize the royal revenue, wherever he found it unguarded; nay, the courage to behold the utter defeat of his forces, the brave Highlanders, without once beading or rallying them, and to scorn danger so much as never to appear in it. For the same reasons, equal favour is by France expected to the rebels, who did nothing but by the assistance and dictates of France.

These, my Lord, are strong French arguments why the King of England should favour brave rebels prompted by France to destroy him. I wish I had eloquence to convince all mankind, that the best defence against all public crimes, is to pardon all public criminals; and that the surest way to secure princes against rebellion, is to spare and encourage rebels.

Indeed different measures and maxims prevail in France, where galleys, banishment, dungeons, racks, and wheels, support the throne, and awe the seditious, and are duly exercised even against opinions and writings. But it is the policy and study of France, that the same prerogative and measures should not prevail in England. Monsieur D'Argenson well knows how much it imports the interest and safety of France, that your court should be kept in due awe by his court, and return upon it none of its own measures.

It is for this reason, my Lord, that Monsieur D'Argenson expects from your excellency a placid compliance with this his demand, and with my request seconding the same. Here, my Lord, exert your talents and exhaust your persuasion; and then he and I will thank you. You will then be happy in having successfully obliged the French court; and it is what is expected from the English ministry.

It is wretched policy to shed the blood of those who would shed ours. It will be to the glory of the king of England's clemency, to wink at treason, and to encourage traitors, brave unhappy men, such as the French council will unwillingly see executed, for their attachment to France, and for their laudable efforts to serve France. Consider, my Lord, that courage is called virtue, and therefore they were virtuous in rebelling. Can the heroic king of England, can the brave English nation, blame such virtue?

Pray, my Lord, behold the young Pretender and his adherents in this light. The young man would have conquered England for the good of England, dethroned the king out of humanity, and enslaved the English for their glory. Such was his harmless heroism, such his clemency; if the king of England will duly return his clemency, it will be acceptable to France.

I own I am rash in thus acquainting your excellency with what your excellency knew before. But I am performing a task very interesting to me, considering from whence it comes. Let these two kings contend equally together, the king of France in pushing with all his might to give England another king; and the king of England in submitting

to France. May the former carry all his views, so salutary to all Europe ! And may the latter be sensible of this, and acquiesce in it ! May they both thus earn everlasting praise, the one in saving all Christendom, and the other for permitting and encouraging him !

I have the honour to be, &c.

The surprising late correspondence between the French ministry and the Dutch minister Van Hoey, is nothing wonderful. They know him, though he does not seem to know them ; and his boasted credit with them, is, I dare say, intirely conformable to their opinion of him : not has any ministry in Europe a different opinion of him. Sure I am, that the English ministry have not,

As to Monsieur D'Argenson, he has made himself the just wonder of all Europe, as he has wisely insinuated to every state in it, that there is but one sovereign in it, that it depends upon the pleasure of that one, how far they shall exert their sovereign power ; and upon his condescension, whether they shall exert any. Methinks I rejoice to find such a singular minister at the head of the French councils ; as I did, a few years ago, to find that profound statesman, Broglie, at the head of the French armies in Germany ; a statesman so long the diverting admiration of the English, whilst he had the honour of representing the French politicians here, and entertaining the English court ; a function in which he was not unequally assisted by his lady, Madam L' Ambassadrice.

The talents of Monsieur D'Argenson seem to be exactly of a piece with those of the Bishop of Beauvais, in the regency of Anne of Austria, the queen-mother of France. He was her almoner, and so much in her good graces, that at first he was considered as prime minister, and even gave audience as such : a station in which he soon shewed his amazing qualifications, especially to the Dutch ambassador, who, upon some particular application or memorial from the states-general to the said bishop, was smartly answered by that deep French politician, that if the Dutch nation expected any assistance or countenance from France, they must forthwith, and, de bon cœur, all turn Roman Catholics.

I think the profound bishop has left at least one genuine successor in Monsieur D'Argenson, who has lately given an equal specimen of his equally signal abilities.

THE END.











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